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VANCOUVER metro®
NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Roberto Luongo reacts during the gold-medal game at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Both Luongo and Canucks teammate Daniel Sedin have opted not to take family with them to the Sochi Games because of security concerns. HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Canucks uneasy over Sochi security

Olympics. 'It's definitely on my mind.... I think we're all a little bit concerned,' says Luongo

Roberto Luongo won't have any family joining him next month when he suits up for Canada at the Winter Olympics.

The same goes for Daniel Sedin.

The Vancouver Canucks teammates are both concerned over security at the Games in Sochi, Russia, after a series of threats and terrorist attacks in the region.

Two suicide bombers killed 34 people in the southern Russian city of Volgograd in December, and officials say they are hunting three more potential attackers — including one believed to be in Sochi.

"It's definitely on my mind, I'm not going to lie," Luongo said after practice on Wednesday. "I think we're all a little bit concerned. We're definitely going to keep an eye on it over the next few weeks."

Sedin, who is set to compete for Sweden along with his twin brother Henrik, said he was "absolutely" concerned about the news coming out of Russia, including email threats on Wednesday against a handful of European countries set to participate at the Olympics.

The threats were largely dismissed as a hoax, but the concern over security in Sochi is serious.

"We talk about it quite a bit. It's nothing you can really joke about," said Sedin. "It's in the back of your head for sure."

Luongo, the odds on favourite to start for Canada in its first game Feb. 13 against Norway, and Sedin both said safety is the main reason their families won't be travelling to Russia.

Sedin added that if family members wanted to join him and his brother, he would discourage them from making the trip.

An Islamic militant group in Dagestan — which is located about 500 kilometres from Sochi — claimed responsibility for the bombings in Volgograd in a video posted on Sunday. The video also contained a threat to strike the Olympics.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MORE OLYMPICS COVERAGE, PAGE 10

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It's freezing — so make a run for it

Walking? Nah. Why not a brisk jog in brisker temperatures? Here's how to do it PAGE 14

Ongoing Ukraine protests turn deadly

Two were killed in clashes between police and protesters in Kyiv, Metro World News reports PAGE 10

What is it about those star-crossed lovers?

West Side Story and Romeo and Juliet, coming to a stage near you PAGE 19

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Kamloops area

Students' online activity could prompt child porn charges: RCMP

The Mounties say the online activity of students in B.C.'s Interior could result in charges including the distribution of child pornography.

The RCMP is being vague about the precise nature of the case, but the force says it relates to material that has been passed between students at several high schools in the Kamloops area.

Cpl. Cheryl Bush says investigators are considering a range of charges, including the production and distribution of child pornography, harassment and uttering threats. Bush says the students involved are under 18.

The superintendent of the local school district, Terry Sullivan, says some students have been disciplined. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Surrey

Woman hit, killed by semi-truck

A 20-year-old woman from Surrey is dead after being struck and killed by a semi truck on Tuesday evening.

Surrey RCMP say the woman was crossing the street at the intersection of 104th Avenue and King George Boulevard at approximately 8:30 p.m. when she was hit by a truck in the left turn lane.

The woman was rushed to hospital but did not survive. The driver remained at the scene and is co-operating with police. No charges have been laid, though the investigation is ongoing.
MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Todd Stone speaks to media at the TransLink offices in New Westminster on Sept. 26. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

'Impasse' on transit? No way, say mayors

Transportation. Minister urging TransLink Mayors' Council to advance a unified proposal

KATE WEBB
kate.webb@metronews.ca

Metro Vancouver mayors scoffed Wednesday at Transportation Minister Todd Stone's suggestion they are at an "impasse" on a vision for transit funding and expansion, during their first meeting at TransLink's offices since October.

The minister was not available for comment Wednesday, but earlier in the week repeated his recycled refrain that he wants the TransLink Mayors' Council, which has little in the way of resources or power, to advance a unified proposal.

The mayors have been calling for a governance overhaul since 2007, when they were stripped of the power to make major spending decisions. As it stands, an unelected corporate board that meets behind closed doors sets the annual operating budget, and the mayors only get to vote on any extras the board proposes.

"All you have to do is look at the legislation and you realize that it simply was never intended for us to do that," said a frustrated North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton, who was acclaimed Wednesday to continue serving as the council's chair.

"So if that's what the ministry would like us to do then they should change the legislation to put us back in the position of being the (TransLink) board."

Walton said he spoke to Minister Stone on Tuesday and is expecting to hear back from him within a week on how the board can be reformed to be more transparent and accountable. Walton has long called for a board that brings both provincial and municipal elected representatives back to the table.

Meanwhile, as of Wednesday there were 298 days left until the province's pledged referendum on TransLink funding, and still no hints from the government on the wording of the question, or whether it will be dual or multiple choice.

Mayors Dianne Watts, Gregor Robertson and Derek Corrigan, who represent the region's three largest municipalities, all said it is entirely the province's job to come up with the wording, since it is their initiative and mandate.

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Pearson Dogwood land. Development plan sparks human-rights objection

Unlike most development proposals, the plan to build up the Pearson Dogwood land to the west of Cambie Street and 59th Avenue sparked a human-rights debate at city council on Wednesday.

"This is about the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities," said Jill Weiss, chair of Vancouver's persons-with-disabilities advisory committee.

The land is owned by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and home to two facilities with about 230 people in residential health-care beds. Many have severe physical disabilities.

The VCH facilities desperately need upgrades, and the development plan does involve building an institution for people with disabilities.

However, according to the city planner, the proposal does not meet global best practices of community living for people with disabilities, uses a model proven to cause harm and contravenes the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

A rendering of the proposed development at Cambie and 59th. CONTRIBUTED

No charges yet. Kelowna reporter accused of threat to murder her boyfriend

A freelance reporter from British Columbia has been arrested in the United States over allegations she threatened to kill her boyfriend, who is a junior hockey player for the Tri-City Americans.

Court documents indicate 25-year-old Kelowna resident Tieja MacLaughlin, who police said had been dating Tri-City Americans player Jackson Playfair, was arrested in Kennewick, Wash.

None of the allegations have been tested in court, and she has not been charged. She appeared in court Tuesday and was held without bail, according to the documents.

Playfair reportedly called police early Saturday.

"Tieja found out the victim cheated on her and she told him over the phone that she was on her way to Kennewick," the arresting officer wrote. "During that phone call, Tieja advised the victim that he would be dead by the end of the night."

The document said MacLaughlin denied making the threats. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Poll results

Residents split on Kinder Morgan pipe expansion

The public appears to be of two minds when it comes to the twinning of the Trans Mountain Pipeline. An online survey by Insights West on Kinder Morgan's proposal found that 48 per cent of British Columbians support the expansion, while 43 per cent are opposed. Eleven per cent are undecided.
MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

New job

UBC president is headed east

University of British Columbia president Stephen Toope is going to Toronto.

Toope, who announced last year he would step down from his post, announced Wednesday that he is taking a job as the director of University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs. Toope, who has been president since 2006, will remain at the university until June 30.
MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

A rendering of the proposed sign at the York Theatre, which would include sponsor West Coast Reduction's name. CONTRIBUTED

Theatre gets $2M for corporate sign

York Theatre. Most residents wrote letters in support, but angry neighbours raised stink

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Some people think the decision stinks, but the York Theatre is allowed to feature a corporation's name in bright lights outside its venue.

West Coast Reduction's name will appear outside the new performance-arts centre on Commercial Drive to recognize its $2-million donation to the Cultch, the organization that operates the theatre in the city-owned building.

The donation — the largest in the Cultch's history — was contingent on the sign the city approved at a public hearing on Monday night.

It will allow "much-needed financial stability during a time of immense change and growth," Cultch executive director Heather Redfern wrote in a letter asking the community to support the sign, which will get dimmer as it gets dark and be shut off at 11 p.m.

Donor

West Coast Reduction donated the millions to celebrate 50 years of operations and has a history of philanthropy throughout the community.

While the vast majority of Vancouverites wrote letters in favour of the sign, a few thought the proposal smelled foul.

West Coast Reduction is a rendering facility that recycles inedible animal products, a process that often leaves an odour throughout the neighbourhood.

"WCR ought to have been required to make drastic changes to curb the disgusting emissions from their plant," Aideen McKenna wrote in a letter to the city.

Smells aside, the Vancouver Public Space Network had concerns about the presence of corporate advertising in city spaces.

"Significant corporate advertising could overshadow the legitimate function of these signs, which is to promote an important civic cultural resource," Stewart Burgess wrote.

Food trucks sell their wares outside the Vancouver Art Gallery.
SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/FOR METRO

The food truck stops here

For the third year, Street Food City is giving Vancouverites the chance to fill their stomachs with a variety of grub from the city's finest food trucks.

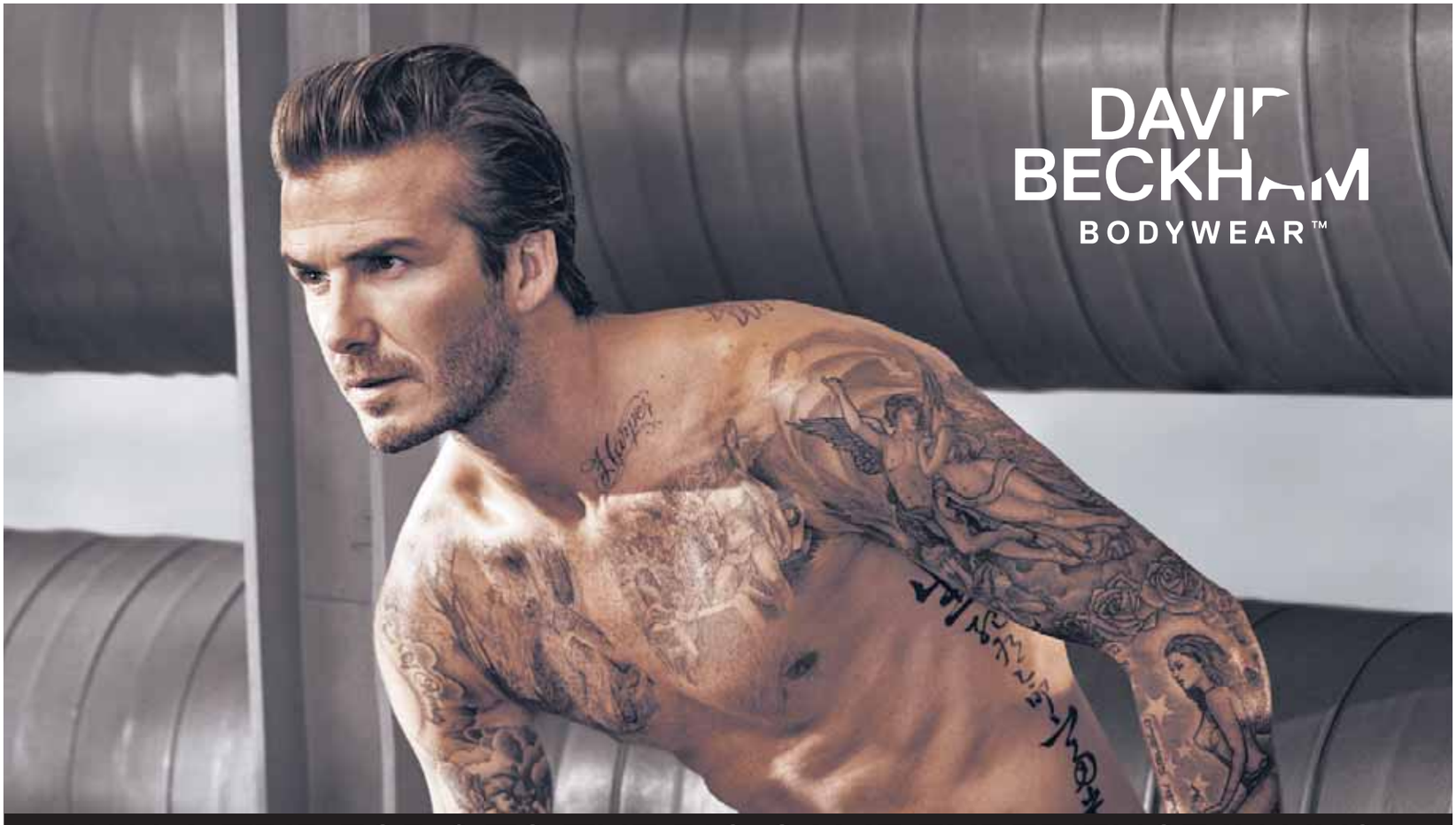
As part of Dine Out Vancouver, Canada's largest restaurant festival, Street Food City looks to satisfy locals' cravings with food and music at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The gathering started Wednesday and will continue until Sunday, with 23 food trucks in rotation.

"The turnout is good," said Leni Burton of the Holy Pergy truck. "It's a great event to have, especially in the winter. It was raining last year, so the weather is way better too."

Two Richmond residents experienced the festival for the first time and enjoyed the "Run Fatboy Run" — deep-fried macaroni and cheese — from REEL Mac and Cheese.

"The festival is really good in that we don't have to go out and look for the trucks," said Catherine Chong. "It's a place where we just know it's all going to be right here and it's going to have great food."
SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/FOR METRO



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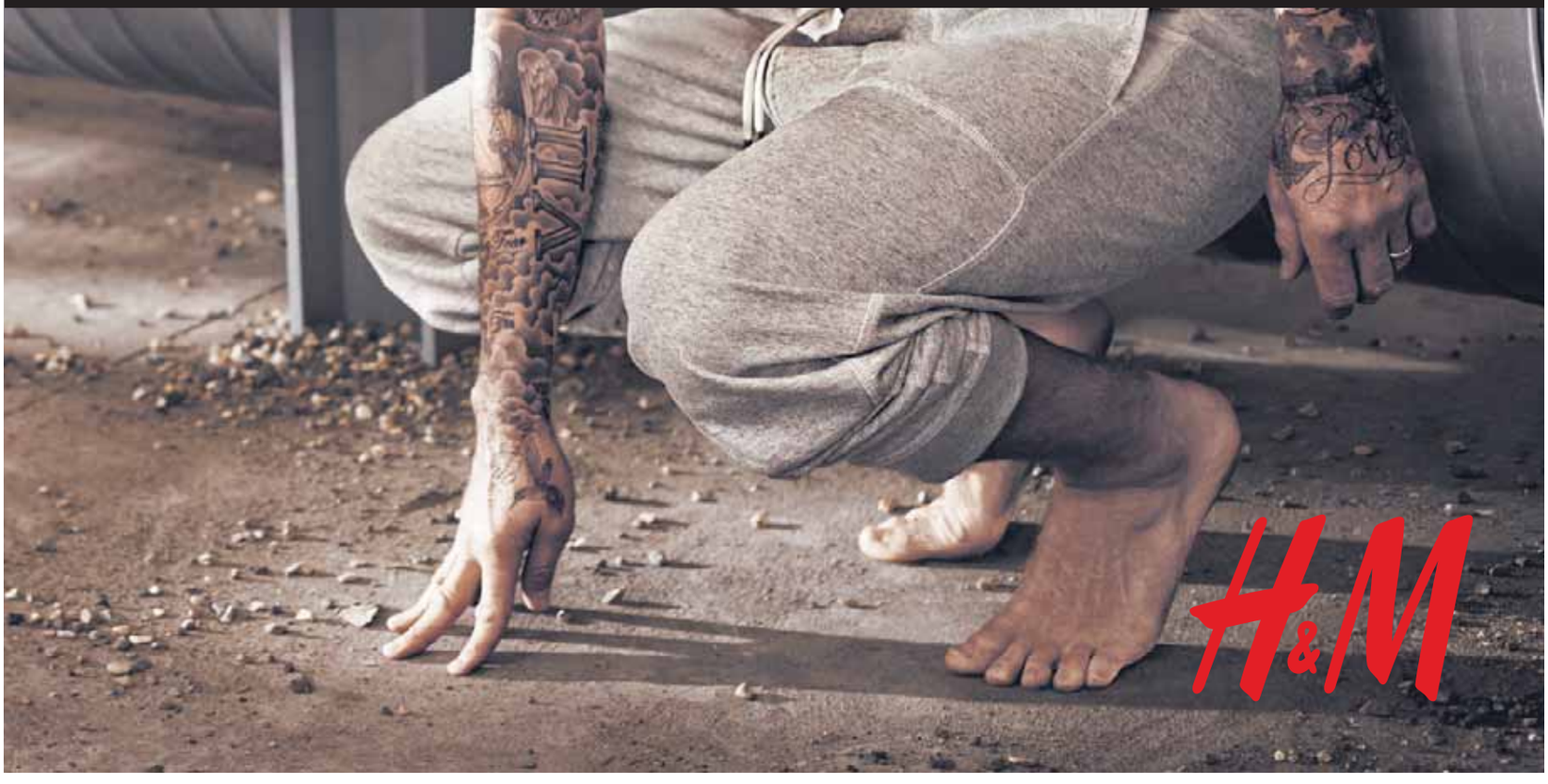

PNE. Gluten Free Expo returns to Vancouver

To call last year's Gluten Free Expo a hit would be an understatement.

Thousands of people lined up for up to four hours to get access to the show floor at the Vancouver Convention Centre in 2013.

Exhibitors expected about 6,000 people to attend the event. Twenty thousand showed up.

Many walked away empty handed (refunds were issued) and angry.

"We're going to need a bigger venue," event spokesperson Kathy Smart had told Metro.

Well, they're back, and bigger than ever. Organizers have had to double the size of the expo and switch venues to the PNE forum to make sure everyone is comfortably accommodated for the show's return this weekend.

A recent survey from expo sponsor Udi's Healthy Foods offers a peak into why gluten-free foods are becoming so popular.

The survey suggests that just 21 per cent of B.C. residents go gluten-free because of a medical diagnosis — such as celiac disease — while another 15 per cent have eliminated or reduced their gluten intake to support a family member.

Nearly half, 48 per cent, of respondents said they chose to reduce their gluten intake purely for lifestyle and health reasons.

The Gluten Free Expo takes place Jan. 25 and 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the PNE forum. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO, WITH FILES FROM EMILY JACKSON

On the web

More information is available at www.glutenfreeexpo.ca.

B.C. Clark says budget in the black, resource sector powers economy

Premier Christy Clark says her government will table a balanced budget next month.

She says the balanced budget will show the government is controlling spending while embracing a growing resource sector that has the power to turn British Columbia into the fastest growing and cleanest economy in Canada.

Clark made the remarks during a keynote speech Wednesday at a natural resources forum in Prince George.

She says B.C.'s resource sector — propelled by growth in mining, forestry and natural gas development — has bounced back after the global meltdown six years ago.

Clark says her Liberals were re-elected with a mandate to grasp resource opportunities that could open huge trade opportunities in Asian markets while remaining environmental leaders.

She says her vision for economic growth includes the construction of the proposed Site C hydroelectric dam and the inclusion of First Nations in that resource growth. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dawn Wells leans against the original S.S. Minnow at the Vancouver International Boat Show. Inset: Wells, a.k.a. Mary Ann Summers from Gilligan's Island, in a promotional photo SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/FOR METRO; INSET: CONTRIBUTED

Smooth sail down memory lane

Minnow is not lost.

Gilligan's Island's Mary Ann arrives in Vancouver with the S.S. Minnow in time for boat show

It's been 50 years since seven men and women set sail on a three-hour tour and got caught in a four-year technicolour shipwreck on Gilligan's Island.

The original S.S. Minnow and castaway Mary Ann Summers arrived in Vancouver Wednesday to take part in the 2014 International Boat Show, where actress Dawn Wells discussed her upcoming book and a planned Gilligan's Island movie, and recounted memories of co-star Russell "The Professor" Johnson, who died last week.

Wells, 75, says she was close to Johnson. "He was solid and all of that, but he had the best sense of humour. He was the funniest. He kept us laughing all the time," said Wells, who remembers him as more than just a co-star.

"Russell and I, had we both not been married, we probably would have had a relationship because we were very close friends … I miss him a lot," she said Monday at B.C. Place.

Wells is planning to release a book, Mary Ann's Good Girls Guide to Life, which will explore Mary Ann's identity and morals and examine the ongoing girl-next-door Mary Ann vs. glamorous Ginger debate.

BC Place

The Vancouver International Boat Show runs until Sunday.

"One of the things I keep saying today is there's too many Gingers. There's too much fame for no reason. It's all about the fashion and 'what am I doing,' and I think this book has something to say about what's the core of who we are," she said.

In addition, she said she believes the ideals of the show, about love, family and pitching in, are still crucial today but are harder to get across.

"There's a reason the show has never been off the air in 50 years in 30 languages. It says something to somebody. It's not just stupid," she said.

The fact that there's a new Gilligan's Island movie in the works for 2015 doesn't surprise her, but she said it would be ridiculous not to ask her and surviving costar Tina Louise to be in a cameo.

"I hope they treat it with the love and respect that the show had. I don't think they should make fun of it," said Wells. SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/FOR METRO

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Ford: Latest embarrassing video just one of life's 'difficult bumps'

Nothing personal.
Toronto mayor happy to talk about city's budget, but won't take questions about Jamaican-infused Steak Queen rant

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford charges through a media scrum at city hall in Toronto on Wednesday. FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford is calling his alcohol-fuelled, profane rant in a Jamaican accent at a restaurant — caught on video — a "minor setback," and says he is entitled to a personal life.

Ford offered no apologies a day after the clip, which shows him using Jamaican swear words and other profanities, at one point aiming his curses at Toronto's police chief, was posted anonymously to YouTube.

"Monday was unfortunate," he said at a late-afternoon news conference. "I had a minor setback. We all experience these difficult bumps in life."

But, he said, it is a "completely private matter."

"As you know, I'm a human being, the same as every one of you, and I'm entitled to a personal life," Ford said. "My personal life does not interfere with work I do day in and day out for the taxpayers of this great city."

Ford refused to answer reporters' questions throughout the day about whether he drove himself to or from the restaurant that night, if he was using drugs and if he was hanging out with his friend Alexander Lisi.

A second video also posted to YouTube, purportedly from the same night, appears to show Ford sitting with Lisi.

Ford's admission that he had been drinking ended weeks of adamant vows that he had given up alcohol.

Ford spent much of his news conference discussing the city's budget and finished by saying he would be "happy to take questions on the budget only."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'A minor setback'

"As you know, I'm a human being, the same as every one of you, and I'm entitled to a personal life."
Toronto Mayor Rob Ford

Police not allowed to see Magnotta research video

A judge has prevented Montreal police from getting their hands on a confidential academic video interview with accused killer Luka Rocco Magnotta.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers welcomed the Quebec Superior Court decision, saying it upholds researchers' rights to protect confidential information needed for their academic work.

The association's executive director says in a statement the ruling represents the first court recognition of researcher-participant privilege.

Montreal police had sought to gain access to a copy of the interview for evidence they're still gathering against the 31-year-old Magnotta, who is charged with first-degree murder in the slaying and dismemberment of Chinese engineering student Jun Lin.

Lawyers representing University of Ottawa criminologists had argued the 2007 interview with a subject known under the pseudonym "Jimmy" should be kept confidential.

Luka Magnotta is shown in an artist's sketch. A judge has prevented police from obtaining a video interview with the accused killer.
MIKE MCLAUGHLIN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The attorneys said Magnotta participated in the study as part of a survey of sex workers under the condition his interview would remain confidential.

"The impact of this decision is that researchers can now have confidence that courts will recognize and will treat seriously promises of confidentiality vital to the conduct of their research," James Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said in a statement Wednesday.

"Courts have recognized the social importance of journalists being able to protect confidential sources, and this decision extends a similar recognition to academic researchers."

The news release published by Turk's association said that, in her ruling, Justice Sophie Bourque noted "much academic research provides useful information on certain aspects of the human condition that are normally kept silent."

The Bourque ruling was also quoted by the association as saying, "The evidence demonstrates that much of the research involving vulnerable people can only be conducted if human participants are given a guarantee that their identities and the information that they share will remain confidential."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Israel gives PM Harper a very special tweet

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife Laureen take a tour of the future site of the Stephen J. Harper Hula Valley Bird Sanctuary Visitor and Education Centre in Hula Valley, Israel, on Wednesday. While in the Middle East, Harper is visiting Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto

Discharge for census resister, 79

A 79-year-old Toronto woman taken to court over refusing to fill out the census was given a conditional discharge on Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta

Over 500,000 had health info stolen

Personal health information belonging to more than half a million Albertans was stolen last September from Medicentres Family Health Care Clinics, Alberta Health Minister Fred Horne announced Wednesday.

"Today, I contacted the Alberta Privacy Commissioner to … formally request an official investigation," Horne said, adding, "Albertans want to know that their information is secure and protected."

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Protests in Ukraine turn deadly

Kyiv. Political crisis intensifies as violent clashes between police and protesters result in fatalities

Protesters battle police in Kyiv on Wednesday. ANDREY SVITAILO/METRO WORLD NEWS

Unrest in Kyiv took a turn for the worse on Wednesday with news that two people died from gunshot wounds during clashes between police and protesters, the first fatalities since demonstrations over the government's rejection of a planned EU treaty began in November.

The day saw state police units dismantle a makeshift barricade on Europe Square and Hrushevskoho Street — the city's new hotspot for clashes, which runs along the cabinet office and parliament buildings. Protesters, who fashioned makeshift armour out of sleeping mats and pieces of wood strapped to their jackets, parried police grenades with Molotov cocktails.

"If we leave now, we will all land up in jail. We will take a stand," Bogdan, a young man guarding a barricade, told Metro. To maintain their position, the protesters ignited huge bonfires, the smoke from which, they claim, neutralizes the pepper gas launched by the police.

When news circulated earlier in the day of the first casualties in the civil unrest, the crowds in this area swelled to an estimated 2,000 by mid-morning. "Burn for our boys!" a voice was heard from the crowd as a gas bomb landed on top of a phalanx of riot police. Some of the bombs lobbed were five-litre pickle jars.

At one moment, an Orthodox priest walked out into the neutral zone between the protesters and police, pleading for calm. However, riot-control units, lined up like a shielded formation of Roman legionaries, advanced towards the protesters, waving their batons and firing rubber bullets. People finally began to flee to their camp at the nearby Maidan Square.

Hrushevskoho Street was emptied after 10 minutes. While the air cleared at Kyiv's freshest battleground, thick black smoke still shrouded city squares elsewhere.

METRO WORLD NEWS IN KYIV

Caught in the clash

Metro photographer injured by grenade

Photographer Andrey Svitailo; the shrapnel he was hit with. MWN

A Metro journalist was injured Wednesday in a stun grenade explosion on Kyiv's Europe Square amid clashes between anti-government protesters and police.

Andrey Svitailo, a staff photographer for the Metro Moscow newspaper, sustained leg injuries caused by shrapnel exploding from a stun grenade thrown by Berkut riot police at protesters.

"It was very sore and painful," Svitailo describes the moment after three pieces of shrapnel struck his calf and thigh. "My jeans ripped open and I was left with some bloody bruises. I literally had to take the shards of grenade out of my clothes.

"But thanks to my long johns, the fragments did not pierce my skin." Svitailo did not require hospitalization and is continuing to cover the protests. METRO WORLD NEWS

Terrorist attack email is just a hoax, says IOC

Torch bearers Yevgeny Apostolov and Alexander Domanov pose with Olympic torches in Novocherkassk, south of Moscow, on Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An email in Russian and English threatening national Olympic delegations and athletes with terrorist attacks at the Sochi Winter Games is a hoax, not a real danger, officials said Wednesday.

Hungarian sports officials, who first reported the email, said they have received assurances from the International Olympic Committee and from the Sochi organizers that the email had no merit. In light of that, the Hungarian Olympic Committee said it will still take part in the Winter Games, which run from Feb. 7 to 23.

Olympic committees from several other European countries, including Germany, Britain and Austria, said they had also received a similar message.

Wolfgang Eichler, spokesman for the Austrian National Olympic Committee, said the email was a hoax that officials had seen before.

"It's a fake mail from a sender in Israel, who has been active with various threats for a few years," Eichler told Austrian news agency APA. "It's been checked out because it also arrived two years ago."

The IOC, meanwhile, repeated its stance that it "takes security very seriously."

"However, in this case it seems like the email sent to the Hungarian Olympic Committee contains no threat and appears to be a random message from a member of the public."

The Canadian Olympic Committee would not say whether it had received a similar message

Security is a major concern at all Olympics but especially in Sochi, which is in southern Russia, just a few hundred kilometres away from a simmering Islamic insurgency in the North Caucasus. One Islamic militant warlord has urged his followers to attack the Sochi Olympics, Russian President Vladimir Putin's pet project.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Don't panic

Many officials said that national committees get Olympic threats fairly often.

- A spokeswoman for Switzerland's Olympic committee said similar threats are common so close to the Winter Games and athletes and officials would base their travel plans instead on the assessment of security officials.

Victims' rights

Morocco amends law allowing rapists to escape persecution

Morocco's parliament has unanimously amended an article in the penal code that had outraged people by allowing a rapist to escape prosecution if he married his underage victim.

Article 475 of the penal code generated unprecedented public criticism after the 2012 suicide of a 16-year-old girl following seven months of marriage to the man she said had raped her.

Activists had called for a revamping of the country's laws dealing with rape. However, in this case it is just an amendment of the existing article, deleting the language allowing the assailant to marry to escape prosecution.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Poland

Personal notes of Pope John Paul II to be published

In his last will, Pope John Paul II commissioned Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, his personal secretary and closest aide of almost 40 years, to burn his personal notes.

Instead, Dziwisz kept them and is having them published before John Paul is declared a saint April 27 in Rome.

He said he burned "those letters and notes that required burning," but said it would have been a crime to burn all the notes which give insight into the pope's soul.

The book, Very Much in God's Hands: Personal Notes 1962-2003, comes out Feb. 5 in Poland.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tale of two toilets

Russian bathroom leaves reporter flushed

When BBC reporter Steve Rosenberg went to use the bathroom at the cross-country skiing and biathlon centre for next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi, he found two toilets, but only one stall. His tweeted picture instantly became a national joke.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Although toilets like this are not common in Russia, social media users posted photos of other toilets standing side by side, including ones in a courthouse and a café. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Kenyan author comes out against homophobia in Africa

Online declaration. Reactions to the writer's coming out were mostly negative

One of Africa's leading literary figures Binyavanga Wainaina says he's known he was gay since he was five-years-old, though he did not have a homosexual encounter until he was 39.

To celebrate his 43rd birthday, the prize-winning Kenyan has published an online essay telling the world that he is gay. His story contributes to an increasingly fierce debate about gays in Africa and is a protest against laws that seek to further criminalize homosexuality.

Wainaina's essay, painful to read, this week announced what he wishes he had told his mother before she died 14 years ago: "I am a homosexual, mum."

In an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday, he said he came out to help preserve his dignity.

"All people have dignity. There's nobody who was born without a soul and a spirit," he said. "There is nobody who is a beast or an animal, right?"

"Every one, we, we homosexuals, are people and we need our oxygen to breathe."

Wainaina, whose hair is dyed in rainbow colours, lashed out at recently passed laws against homosexuality in Nigeria and Uganda. He also criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin, who faces criticism over Russia's law banning "gay propaganda" aimed at youth.

"I can't sleep at night because there are people who I may know or who I don't even know ... who may be dying or being beaten or being tortured right now in a Nigerian cell or three weeks ago in a Ugandan one," he said.

Prize-winning Kenyan author Binyavanga Wainaina talks during a television interview in Nairobi, Kenya, Wednesday. He publicly declared his homosexuality in an online essay last weekend. BEN CURTIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dennis Nzioka, a gay rights activist in Kenya, welcomed Wainaina's public announcement and said his prominence may influence other gay people in Africa and Kenya to come out publicly. He said Wainaina's announcement was both inspirational and courageous.

"Courageous, because to do this in the Kenyan society knowing very well what he can face; ostracization and rejection," Nzioka said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the front lines

Clashes over gay laws continue

Thousands of protesters threw stones into the Shariah court in a north Nigerian city Wednesday, urging the speedy convictions and executions of 11 men arrested for belonging to gay organizations.

Security officials fired into the air to disperse protesters in Bauchi city so the accused men could be safely returned to the prison.

Meanwhile, in Uganda, a court on Wednesday ordered the deportation of Bernard Russell, a British man facing criminal charges related to images of him having sex with another man.

Bernard Russell THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A barely visible sculpted rabbit is tucked inside one of the bronze ears of a nine-metre-tall statue of Nelson Mandela outside the government complex in Pretoria, unveiled a day after the South African leader's funeral last month. Officials want the miniature bunny removed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Officials want to pull rabbit out of Mandela statue's ear

Hopping mad.
Sculptors apologize to those who felt it was disrespectful, arts and culture minister says

A new, nine-metre sculpture of Nelson Mandela has a tiny, barely visible quirk: a sculpted rabbit tucked inside one of the bronze ears.

South African officials want the miniature bunny removed from the statue, which was unveiled outside the government complex in Pretoria on Dec. 16, a day after Mandela's funeral. The department of arts and culture said it didn't know the two sculptors, Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse van Vuuren, had added a rabbit, said to be a discreet signature on their work.

Dali Tambo, the CEO of Koketso Growth that was appointed to manage the statue project, said the artists, who belong to South Africa's white Afrikaner minority, were selected in part because the project was a multi-racial effort in keeping with Mandela's principle of reconciliation. He said their signatures could be added in a discreet place, perhaps on Mandela's heel. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hasty decision?

The artists said they added the rabbit as a "trademark" after they were not allowed to engrave their signatures on the statue's trousers.

- They said the rabbit represented the pressure of finishing the sculpture on time because "haas" — the word for rabbit in the Dutch-based Afrikaans language — also means "haste."

Ceres

Scientists spy water on dwarf planet

Scientists have confirmed signs of water on the dwarf planet Ceres, one of the few bodies in the solar system to hold that distinction.

Peering through the Herschel Space Observatory, a team led by the European Space Agency detected water plumes spewing from two regions on Ceres, the largest object in the asteroid belt. The observations, in Thursday's issue of Nature, come as NASA's Dawn spacecraft is set to arrive at the Texas-sized dwarf planet next year.

The source of the water plumes is still unclear. Scientists think there may be a layer of ice just below the surface that gets heated by the sun or the plumes could be spewed by ice volcanoes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michigan airport

Influx of owls poses threat to aircraft

Traps are being used to catch snowy owls alive at Michigan's Gerald R. Ford International Airport after staff members shot nine in the last two months to ensure aircraft safety.

Snowy owls are out in force in parts of the Midwest this winter, thanks to a population boom in their Arctic breeding lands. Birdwatchers have reported spotting them more frequently than usual in several places around Michigan.

An airport spokeswoman said the influx of snowy owls into the area is unprecedented and airport staff cannot compromise flight safety. The owls are known to fly low and could collide with an aircraft. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Get ready for cool runnings

Running in a winter wonderland. First step is the worst, says expert with ice in her veins

JACOB MORGAN
Metro in Saskatoon

With Canada having experienced a brutal cold snap from coast to coast at the outset of 2014, the rest of the country can learn a thing or two from the folks in the Prairies.

Lisette Schermann is the manager of the Brainsport store, a staple of Saskatoon's Broadway Avenue. She says that when the temperatures dip far below zero, there is no reason to sit inside and sulk.

Instead, try going for a brisk run on the tundra.

"The hardest part is getting out there," she said. "Once you're outside it's not nearly as bad as you think."

There are many common misconceptions when it comes to winter running, said Schermann. For instance, newbies tend to assume they're going to feel as cold as they do when walking from the front door to the car.

"People definitely overdress," she said. "They're judging it on experiences of walking or driving in the cold where you're not producing as much body heat."

However, she said that doesn't mean would-be winter runners don't need to "step up their game, gear-wise."

Some must-have items: sneakers with cleats for traction on the ice, reflective materials for visibility during those long winter nights and a balaclava to protect your face from the windchill.

Once that's done, it's time to hit the snow.

But make sure not to start off with heavy speed work, as Schermann said the frigid weather can extend average paces by 10 per cent.

"You only really have to be aware of that the first few runs and then you get your snow legs," she said.

And when the season is done, Schermann said many runners are ahead of the game.

Even if you're not looking for a challenge, Schermann said a nice jog can be a great cure for the winter blues.

"There aren't that many opportunities to get outside in the winter time, and running is a really easy one."

Truth or dare

Truth: In order to gain traction on the ice, you need shoes designed with proper grip and insulation.

- **Dare:** Try the DIY approach with screws in the soles and duct tape on the tips for extra heat.

Truth: When you first get started with winter running, your average pace could slow down by about 10 per cent.

- **Dare:** By the end of the season, try to beat the speed you have in the summer.

Truth: One of the best parts of winter running is getting outside to explore nature.

- **Dare:** Find the very best trails in your city and run them all before the last of the snow melts away.

Metro asked: What's your winter running pet peeve?

"Just the ice is sometimes trouble for me. ... They make grips for your shoes or people screw actual screws into their shoes."

Jillian Joan, 23, Brooks Running Company employee, Alberta

"Definitely the windchill. It's probably the worst thing. Everything else seems pretty good though."

Kristen Christensen, 30s, rec programmer, Saskatoon

"When winter runners unexpectedly run across an intersection ... as a driver on icy roads I don't have enough time to necessarily stop."

Dave Cazakoff, 28, student, Saskatoon

"When I don't have the right wind-breaking material and my legs get really cold. The front of my thighs burn from being so cold."

Crystal Clarke, 34, librarian, Saskatoon

"I run around near the residential areas and sometimes people don't shovel their walks so you'll be running into deep snow."

Benjamin Lam, 27, engineer, Saskatoon

"When people don't get out of your way, even when you call out. ... Running through a snow drift is not a whole lot of fun."

Becky Mang, 33, engineer, Regina

JACOB MORGAN/ METRO IN SASKATOON

Must-have gear

Hat

SUGOI Snowflake Tuke. Doesn't have to be too thick, as long as it covers the ears.

Balaclava

Saucony DryLete Balaclava. Features mesh over the mouth for breathability.

Gloves

SUGOI Wind Mitt. Warmer than gloves. For an extra layer, try wearing gloves underneath the mitts.

Base layer

Helly Hansen Warm. Merino wool to stay fresher smelling.

Mid layer

SUGOI Women's Speedster 3 Performance Hoodie. Features a ponytail hole in the hood.

Outer layer

SUGOI Jackie Thermal Jacket. Windproof panels over the sleeves and a fleecy breathable back. Lots of pockets.

Pants

Salomon Nova Softshell pant. Warmest pant at Brainsport.

Ankle

SUGOI Resistor Run Gaiter. Keeps snow out of shoes.

Sneaker

Saucony Ride running shoe. (Note: this model is using regular grip so as not to damage the grip on the winter shoes during a test run.)

Future of Assad focus of Syria peace talks

A bitter test of wills. The two sides seemed impossibly far apart in opening statements in the Swiss city of Montreux

Furiously divided from the start, representatives of Syrian President Bashar Assad and the rebellion against him threatened Wednesday to collapse a peace conference intended to lead them out of civil war.

Assad's future in the country devastated by three years of bloodshed was at the heart of the sparring, which took place against a pristine Alpine backdrop as Syrian forces and rebel fighters clashed across a wide area from Aleppo and Idlib in the north to Daraa in the south.

U.S. and UN officials said merely getting the two sides in the same room was something of a victory, but UN chief Ban Ki-moon's claim that the discussions were "harmonious and constructive" was at odds with the testy exchange when he tried to get the podium from Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moallem.

"You live in New York. I live in Syria," Moallem angrily told Ban. "I have the right to give the Syrian version here in this forum. After three years of suffering, this is my right."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Butting heads

The Western-backed opposition said Assad's departure was their starting point, echoing the position laid out by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who said the resolution cannot be about one man's — or one family's — insistence on clinging to power.

- Syrian Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi told reporters firmly that there will be no transfer of power, and that President Bashar Assad is staying.

Anti-abortion march in D.C.

Thousands of anti-abortion demonstrators gather on the snow covered National Mall in Washington, Wednesday, for the annual March for Life. The march protests the Supreme Court's landmark 1973 decision that declared a constitutional right to abortion.

CHARLES DHARAPAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thailand

Bangkok declares state of emergency

As a state of emergency came into effect Wednesday in the Thai capital of Bangkok, defiant protesters marched on government offices and defaced the wall outside of national police headquarters, while a prominent government supporter in the country's northeast was the target of a shooting attack.

The government said it enacted the emergency decree to improve security and ensure that Feb. 2 elections, opposed by the protesters, are held without disruption. Officials declared there would be no crackdown on the demonstrators, who have seized several patches of the capital, and life in the city continued as normal with tourist sites unaffected and no major deployment of extra security forces.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Diverted

Israeli security says it foiled al-Qaida plot

Israel on Wednesday said it had foiled an "advanced" al-Qaida plan to carry out a suicide bombing on the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv and bomb other targets, in what analysts said was the first time the global terror network's leadership has been directly involved in plotting an attack inside Israel.

The Shin Bet intelligence agency said it had arrested three Palestinians who allegedly plotted bombings, shootings, kidnappings and other attacks. It said the Palestinian men, two from Jerusalem and one from the West Bank, were recruited by an operative based in the Gaza Strip who worked for al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Oil starts flowing from Oklahoma to Texas via Keystone XL pipeline

Like oil and water. CEO says southern leg is a 'win-win-win' as activists worry those who live along route will be ultimate losers

Canadian oilsands producers have a direct pipeline link between Alberta and the U.S. Gulf Coast with the official start-up Wednesday of the Keystone XL pipeline's southern leg.

The project's opposition, meanwhile, vowed to watch the new pipeline "like a hawk" as it continues to urge President Barack Obama to reject the larger, more contentious northern leg of the system.

"This morning we have made a major change in where the largest refining hub in the world gets its oil," said Alex Pourbaix, the executive in charge of oil pipelines at TransCanada Corp., the company building the line.

CEO Russ Girling described the $2.3-billion US project as a "win-win-win" for U.S. Gulf refiners, who'll get access to a cheaper, more secure source of crude, for North American crude producers, who'll get a better price for their landlocked oil and for consumers, who may pay a cheaper price at the pump as expensive foreign imports are supplanted.

The only losers, he said, are the foreign suppliers whose product will be pushed out of the lucrative Gulf market.

"We're seeing an enormous change in North American energy markets and how energy gets delivered," Girling told a news conference Wednesday.

He said there's "not a chance" that crude will be exported overseas from the Gulf — at least not in his lifetime — disputing a common assertion from pipeline opponents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sticky situation

Plenty of criticism of the pipeline has gushed up.

- Jane Kleeb, with the anti-pipeline advocacy group Bold Nebraska, said that Wednesday marked a "very sad day" for those worried about their land in Texas and Oklahoma. "We all know this pipeline is a huge risk to folks along the route," she said. "Citizens are watching this pipeline like a hawk. They know that they are bracing for the worst today as this pipeline starts up."

Another jewel for the crown?

The 29.6-carat blue diamond recovered by Petra Diamonds from a mine near Pretoria, South Africa, is seen in this Jan. 18 photo. Petra said in a statement that the diamond — found in the Cullinan mine, which has yielded, among other famous stones, the 530-carat Star of Africa blue diamond that is part of the British crown jewels — is a vivid blue with extraordinary tone and clarity, and could yield a polished stone of great value.

PHILIP MOSTERT/PETRA DIAMONDS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Warns of low inflation

Bank of Canada keeps interest rate steady at 1%

The Bank of Canada is lowering its forecast for inflation, which has been persistently below the desired target, but keeping its key interest rate unchanged at one per cent.

The central bank said inflation is expected to be lower than previously projected, partly due to price competition among retailers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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PITFALLS OF AN ENTERTRAINER

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

I've had such a negative perception of gyms that as I was writing this column about my new gym membership I suddenly remembered that I'd already had a gym membership, about 10 years ago, and had banished it from my memory like Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace, a movie that doesn't exist.

The memory is foggy but my brief time there (it was a YMCA) reminded me of high school, complete with stale-smelling change rooms, annoying cliques and crippling self-doubt heavier than any weight. Well, not any weight. Not those little pink ones. I have a little self-respect.

Lacking the requisite cardiovascular strength (i.e. I didn't have the heart), I didn't set a sneakered foot inside a gym until a decade later when, fresh out of comedy school, I took a gig at a fitness chain where my job was to entertain people while they did ab exercises. I was keen on my first post-school assignment, which is why I was blind to the fact that this is the worst idea in the history of entertainment — akin to entertaining air traffic controllers with a game of bingo.

At best, the exercisers tolerated me. At worst, they yelled at me to stop, which is part of the job, except you're not supposed to think, "That heckler is right!"

This did not improve my feeling toward the gym industry. I shunned them, preferring to exercise outside in the winter even if that meant temperatures so cold I risked ending up like Jack Nicholson at the end of The Shining.

But that all changed recently. I discovered a little gym in my neighbourhood that's just perfect for me. It's small so it doesn't attract many preeners, and it's open 24 hours so I can fiddle with the machinery alone. I may yet end up the first person ever killed by an elliptical, but at least my low-impact death will only be a CCTV YouTube sensation, not an in-person humiliation.

I've been hitting the gym for about three weeks now, and it gets easier every time as I pick up a few tricks about how to carry and motivate myself:

- It helps to put the Edmonton Oilers on TV during your workout. That way you see yourself working harder than an entire team of professional athletes.
- Wearing a towel over your shoulders and carrying a water bottle shows your fellow exercisers that you are the real deal, just like the people in the ads.
- Fake punching the air looks pretty cool.
- Most importantly, I've learned that gym-goers are a family. If I see an overweight person, I show support with a hearty "Hang in there! It gets better!" If I see an attractive person, I say "Yeeaahhh."

I fully recommend that you follow these tips. Sure, conversations might go a little awry with certain members, but that just reminds me of another important gym fact I learned in high school: Running away is excellent exercise.

ZOOM

AK-47s' cruel and cool culture

COURTESY RALPH ZIMAN

Project highlights duality of AK-47s

A filmmaker has shone light on Africa's controversial use of the AK-47, by photographing vibrant replicas of the assault rifle.

Ralph Ziman, from Johannesburg, took images of Zimbabwean street vendors brandishing copies of the infamous weapon that were made using traditional Shona-style beadwork. METRO

Q and A

'Beautiful yet venomous snake'

RALPH ZIMAN
South Africa-born filmmaker, based in Los Angeles

What inspired you to address gun culture?
The story behind this project — entitled Ghosts — began a year ago when I was back in my hometown of Johannesburg. I was reminded of the rate of gun violence connected to the AK-47 rifle that has gripped the entire continent of Africa and intrigued by the terror that firearms hold in African culture.

The AK-47 has killed millions, but at the same time has been pivotal in the struggle for independence — the gun appears on the Mozambique flag. Did you have the duality of the weapon in mind?
Without a doubt. These vibrantly-coloured guns in my images highlight the alluring nature of the rifle. It's like a beautiful yet venomous snake. In South Africa, this weapon was once an instrument against the apartheid regime.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

A picture says a thousand words, or so the saying goes, and apps like Snapchat and Instagram seem to be proving the saying true. But just because you've got that beach pic of your toes in the sand, doesn't mean no one wants to read the rest of your vacation story (actually, if they're suffering through this polar vortex, they might not want to). Inspired by newspapers' forays into long-form visual story-telling, we've compiled apps that let you do just the same.

ISTOCK IMAGES

Storehouse:
User-friendly with a simple design, Storehouse lets you import photos and videos from your computer, Dropbox, Flickr or Instagram to add seamlessly to your narrative.

Prss:
Create your own online magazine using your own videos, photos with an easy-to-use template — so you don't have to be an InDesign wizard to get your work looking sharp.

Storybird:
Billed as more of an educational tool, this app lets you create a storybook based on other people's illustrations and animations. It's geared toward kids 13+, but really, can't we all benefit from a little creative non-fiction?

Comments

RE: Watching The NHL Has Become The Same As Witnessing A Bar Brawl, says Paul Sullivan, published Jan. 22

If you don't like fighting in hockey there are plenty of other things to watch on TV!! If anything the NHL is getting a little wimpy these days. The true fans like the state of the game and the constant whining that the game is too violent is annoying and will change nothing. **mbacks posted to metronews.ca**

Is there any surprise that Canadian athletics is considered a joke worldwide? Why hockey fans continuously equate toughness with fighting is beyond me. There are tougher athletes competing in rugby and Aussie Rules footie that put these guys to shame. **aferdinanda posted to metronews.ca**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
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Snap to it and play it real cool for West Side Story

Based on Romeo and Juliet. Which, coincidentally, is also playing in the city from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

Jump to it: Get ready for the gang fights and the romance, musical-style that is, when West Side Story arrives the Queen Elizabeth Theatre from Feb. 4-9. CONTRIBUTED

If you're looking for a good sports rivalry, look no further than the Jets versus the Sharks.

Two teams loaded with young talent. One built with local players, the other with imports. They play hard. For keeps. And when they face-off against each other, you just know something or someone's gonna snap ...

And snap ...

Snap … snap ...

Just play it cool, boy, real cool … Okay, so it's theatre, not sport. And the teams are gangs. And there's way more singing, dancing and that aforementioned snapping than you'd ever see in an NHL game.

Less blood, too.

Yes, it's West Side Story. (Did the photo give it away?) And it's at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre from Feb. 4-9.

Presented by Broadway Across Canada, Tony Award-winning librettist Arthur Laurent's Broadway direction is recreated for the touring production by his associate director David Saint.

Sure, the musical's been around the theatrical block but the story — unlikely lovers struggling to rise above hatred and intolerance — remains timeless.

You wanna go? Go cool ...

Of course, if a rocket in your pocket isn't your thing, why not check out the story that inspired it?

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet presents Shakespeare's enduring love story Romeo and Juliet at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Jan. 30 to Feb. 1.

Faithful to Shakespeare's version, this adaptation was created for the Dutch National Ballet by its late artistic director, Rudi van Dantzig.

"(He) was an artist of the rarest calibre; a writer, dancer and choreographer, whose aesthetic instincts were matched only by his strong opinions and political voice," says RWB's artistic director, Andre Lewis. "Though no longer with us, he left behind a great legacy of works, including this stunning Romeo and Juliet …

"His vision of the Bard's story is poetic, exciting and deeply romantic."

And just in time for Valentine's Day. Tickets for it run $29 to $89. Visit rwb.org for more info.

West Side Story tickets start at $35. More info at broadwayacrosscanada.ca.

Details

- Broadway Across Canada's West Side Story plays at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver Feb. 4 - 9.

Where art thou?

Great question. If you're itching to get your art on over the next couple of weeks, check out Paintoralism, an exhibition of new paintings by Vancouver artist Thomas Anfield. According to advance publicity, the artist "explores the human form within a geometric rubric," a line I'm keen to try out this weekend at the Roxy. Check out the exhibition from Jan. 15 to Feb. 8 at Initial Gallery (2339 Granville St.). More info at initialgallery.com.

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Veronica Roth

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Last Week: 1 / Weeks on List: 3

2. THE INVENTION OF WINGS Sue Monk Kidd

A magnificent novel about two unforgettable American women. Sue Monk Kidd presents a masterpiece of hope, daring, the quest for freedom, and the desire to have a voice in the world.

Last Week: 2 / Weeks on List: 3

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on List
3.	THE POWER OF HABIT Charles Duhigg	7	3
4.	LIFE AFTER LIFE Kate Atkinson	3	3
5.	THE DEAD IN THEIR VAULTED ARCHES Alan Bradley	18	2
6.	THE POUND A DAY DIET Rocco Dispirito	8	3
7.	COLD HARD TRUTH ON FAMILY KIDS & MONEY Kevin O'Leary	9	3
8.	SYCAMORE ROW John Grisham	6	14
9.	THE START HERE DIET Tosca Reno	15	3
10.	STOP OVERTHINKING YOUR MONEY Preet Banerjee	11	3
11.	JOYOUS HEALTH Joy McCarthy	17	2
12.	ALL IN Arlene Dickinson	12	3
★ 13.	DUTY Robert Gates	~	1
14.	THE DEMONOLOGIST Andrew Pyper	19	2
15.	DARK WOLF Christine Feehan	5	3
16.	FIRST LOVE James Patterson	20	2
17.	TEARDROP Lauren Kate	16	3
18.	HAZARDOUS DUTY W.E.B. Griffin	14	3
★ 19.	THE CONFIDENT MOM Joyce Meyer	~	1
★ 20.	MY JOURNEY Olivia Chow	~	1

Combined Fiction and Non-Fiction Bestsellers for the week, ending January 27th

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Gabrielle. Quebec-born filmmaker strives for bittersweet romantic tale

Sometimes less is more. Just ask director Louise Archambault, whose film Gabrielle went through many changes before cameras rolled.

"The story was much bigger in the beginning," says the Quebec-born filmmaker. "For a long time half of it was set in India. It was big. We almost asked for money for funding with that script. I wanted those Indian kids to come to Montreal and it was so complicated. It was very big for my second feature. My producers said, 'Are you sure you want to do all this?' So at some point I decided to cut it in half and focus on Gabriele and just have a little incursion to India."

The result is an intimate film focused on the title character, a young woman with Williams syndrome who falls in love with Martin (Alexandre Landry), a singer in her recreation centre choir. When Martin's mother expresses concern about the relationship, Gabrielle becomes determined to find happiness, independence and a relationship with her boyfriend despite the roadblocks and prejudices presented by her developmental disabilities.

Louise Archambault.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Played by first timer Gabrielle Marion-Rivard, the film takes on extra meaning when it is revealed that the actress has Williams syndrome in real life.

"I didn't know if she would have the strength or the talent to make the film," says Archambault. "For an actor to have a feature film on your shoulders is huge, so for a year I hesitated. I did some workshops with her. With her syndrome she has theatrical behaviour, so she is very extroverted and that's not good for cinema but I loved her light... her magical light. Her happiness.... And, she's a good singer! And I needed a good singer. No lip syncing.

"At some point I realized, it was her. I'll let go of perfection and things I had in mind and I'll try to find ways to work with her and find solutions every day because she is just so right for the part. It wasn't that easy, and editing helps."

The finished film is a tender tearjerker, but undeniably soul-stirring. "It's a delicate subject," says Archambault, "but I knew I didn't want to go into miserabilism and at the same time I didn't want it to be too sugary. If I had used only actors I think it would have been fake.

"We hoped we would reach an audience. I didn't want to just make a film about mentally challenged people in love. Yes, it is a film about love but it is about music as well: choir singing and how it gives you strength, whatever you are in life. I wanted people to identify with that."

RICHARD CROUSE/METRO

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The leading ladies make Jason Reitman the man

Labor Day. Director says he owes his success to the talent of the actresses in his films

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Jason Reitman directs Labor Day, which opens next Friday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

For his fifth feature film, director Jason Reitman takes on Joyce Maynard's novel Labor Day, about an escaped convict (Josh Brolin) who takes a single mother (Kate Winslet) hostage over a holiday long weekend. To hear Reitman tell it, any success he's had as a director is all down to his leading ladies.

How did you approach adapting the novel into a film?
The narrative follows the book so carefully. I was trying to recreate how the book made me feel. The book is told so beautifully; it's so emotional and I had such an immediate reaction to it that I wanted to create a cinematic experience that mirrored the book. I wanted to tell a story all the way to the end and leave people with a sense of romance. You can't always punch people in the ribs. Not every time.

When did you first read the book?
I read it while it was in galleys, a few years ago. And my producer, Helen Estabrook, found it and gave it to me and said, "You're going to love this," and she was right. My question was, "Is Kate Winslet available?" We got Josh, went to Kate and she said, "I'd love to do it, but I'll do it in a year." So we waited a year for her. That's how Young Adult came to be — I made it in that year.

You're developing quite a track record of working with actresses.
Frankly, I've just been very lucky, you know? To have worked with Maria Bello, Ellen Page, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick, Charlize Theron and now Kate Winslet? I mean, it's an unreal group. I'm lucky that they've chosen to work with me. It's wonderful. I mean, it makes me look better than I am. That's the truth. In their hands, it makes me look like a decent director.

You could try to go out and make a movie ...
With the worst actors possible? I would think given the option of working with brilliant people? Yeah, I'll continue to do that. I find that I know when they're right when it just seems honest and real. When I'm watching an audition, whether it's for a lead or the tiniest part, do they make the words seem honest? It's not if it's funny, it's not if it's dramatic, it's not if it's moving. It's just, does my bulls-detector go off?

Was that how it was with your young star, Gattlin Griffith?
We looked at a lot of young men, and he came in and it was just instantaneous. It's those eyes. The whole movie is his point of view looking at the world — watching this man, watching his mother, trying to figure out what they're doing, trying to figure out his own sexuality. He could do everything without talking, and that's what I needed.

And you cast a remarkably accurate look-alike for young Josh Brolin for the flashbacks.
Tom Lipinski looks exactly like Josh Brolin. My girlfriend at the time said, "When he heard you were casting this movie he must have shot in his pants," (laughs). Use that in your paper.

Devil's Knot. Colin Firth drawn to film by vision of Canadian director Egoyan

Colin Firth stars in Devil's Knot, which opens Friday in Toronto. CONTRIBUTED

Colin Firth admits he knew nothing about the West Memphis Three when he first encountered Devil's Knot, a dramatic take on the mysterious slayings of three Arkansas boys in 1993 and the controversial conviction of three teens in their deaths.

But he says he was immediately fascinated by the "diabolical" misconduct of justice involved, and was tantalized by the unusual vision of Canadian director Atom Egoyan.

The Oscar-winning British actor says this is not a story that easily fits Hollywood's storytelling mould, and that's what made Egoyan especially suited to putting the infamous tale on the big screen.

Questions linger to this day about what really happened, and Firth notes that Egoyan wasn't afraid to leave those loose ends dangling in the movie.

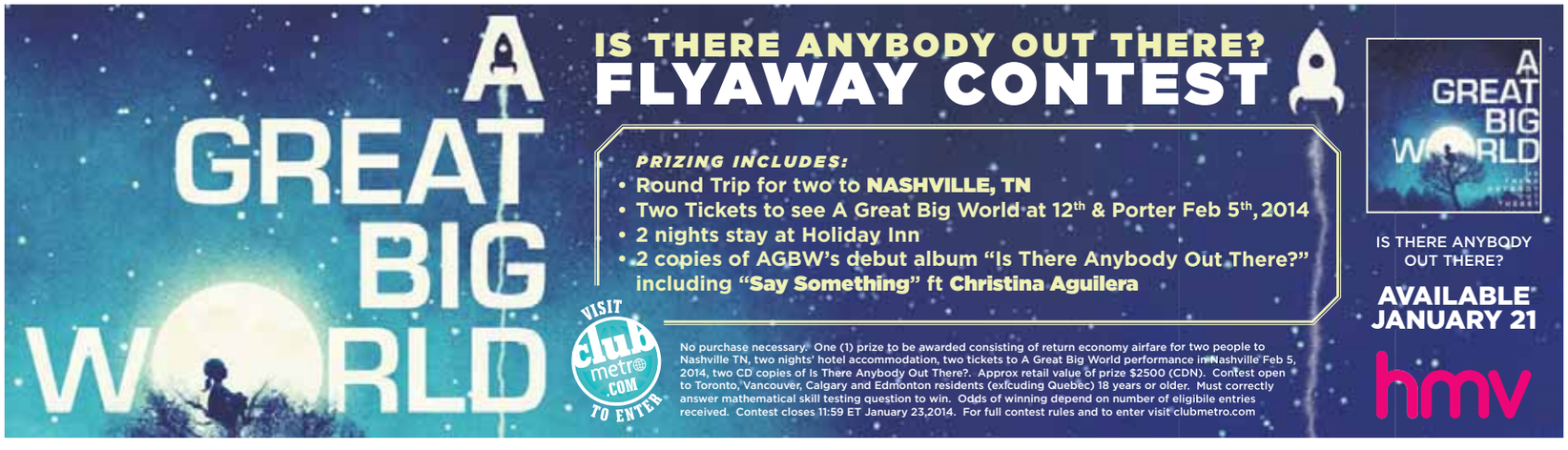
"He finds things that other people might not notice and if this is a case that can't be solved easily then that's what's interesting — let's be honest about that, let's not try and manufacture resolutions which aren't really there, let's see what our relationship is with the insoluble, with frustration," Firth said during a stop at the Toronto International Film Festival back in September.

"He's, I think, a real master of tone and of the mood of an experience. (This is) a story which has so many threads and so many strands, and it's not one single arc and there isn't a single protagonist. To me, he's integrated the film through that pervading mood. It's the way he lights things, and the way he uses music, and the way he creates connections and in ways that aren't conventional."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"He's, I think, a real master of tone and of the mood of an experience."
Colin Firth on filmmaker Atom Egoyan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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Quentin Tarantino ALL IM AGES GETTY

Tarantino will probably get stern with Dern after leak

Quentin Tarantino is calling off plans to make a western, The Hateful Eight, as his next film after the first draft of the script was leaked around Hollywood, he tells Deadline. "I'm very, very depressed. I finished a script, a first draft, and I didn't mean to shoot it until next winter, a year from now," he explains. "I gave it to six people, and apparently it's gotten out." Among the half dozen who received the script were actors Michael Madsen, Tim Roth and current Oscar nominee Bruce Dern, and Tarantino is apparently pretty sure it was Dern's representatives who are responsible for the leak. Tarantino says the leak became apparent when his own agent's office was inundated with calls from reps trying to book their clients in smaller roles in the script. Tarantino now plans to publish the screenplay instead and move on to another project.

Harry hits the sauce after achieving South Pole goal

Prince Harry celebrated reaching the South Pole in true style, going on a "two-day bender" and drinking champagne out of a prosthetic limb, actor and trek-mate Dominic West tells the Telegraph. "Two of the Aussie guys stripped naked and ran around the pole, but most of us, Harry included, just went on a two-day bender with the Icelandic truck drivers who had brought some lethal home brew with them," West says, adding that Harry "told some eye-wateringly rude jokes."

Prince Harry

The Word

Lawrence wasn't first choice for Silver Linings Playbook

MELINDA TAUB
Metro World News

In Silver Linings Playbook, Jennifer Lawrence played a woman who'd gotten married, been widowed, gone crazy with grief and slept her way out of at least one job. Believe it or not, the first choice to play that role was not a 21-year-old.

Harvey Weinstein recently revealed that a different pixie-cut thespian was originally slated for the role: Anne Hathaway was his original choice to play Tiffany. "Silver Linings Playbook was originally going to be with Anne Hathaway and Mark Wahlberg," the studio exec told Howard Stern. "And then Anne wasn't doing it. And she's marvellous and wonderful and she was my choice, I love her."

So why wasn't Anne up there yelling and twitching and dancing poorly? Apparently she and director David O. Russell didn't hit it off. "David and Anne had some creative differences," Weinstein said. "They didn't see eye-to-eye." That's no shocker — David O. Russell is famously difficult to work with. He's gotten into shoving matches with both George Clooney and Lily Tomlin. Hathaway doesn't seem like she'd be very accepting of shoving. And since both she and Lawrence won Oscars that year, she's probably cool with how things worked out. Of course, Jennifer won Best Actress, while Anne nabbed a mere Best Supporting Actress statuette for Les Miserables. Yeah, she might be grinding her teeth at night about this one.

Katy Perry

Praise the Lord! Perry's body is the real deal

Katy Perry admits she had some help in developing her impressive figure, but it wasn't from a surgeon. The voluptuous singer tells GQ that when she was 11 years old, "I lay on my back one night and looked down at my feet and I prayed to God. I said, 'God, will you please let me have boobs so big that I can't see my feet when I'm lying down?'" Perry says. "God answered my prayers. I had no clue they would fall into my armpits eventually." She also insists her lack of artificial augmentation lends her more credibility. "I've never had any plastic surgery. Not a nose, not a chin, not a cheek, not a tit," she says. "So my messages of self-empowerment are truly coming from an au natural product."

Efron 'couldn't be happier' with life after rehab stint

After Zac Efron's rehab stint last spring for a reported drug problem, he's is excited to be moving on and growing from the experience. "I'm so happy. I feel like I'm in a great place and I'm glad that I'm really here to share this moment with everybody and be present for all of it," Efron said at a press conference on Tuesday for his new film, That Awkward Moment, in New York City. The 26-year-old actor said of his "interesting year" that he "learned so many things.

Zac Efron

"The best part of it was being able to reflect upon that experience and realize how much I have learned about myself and the kind of man I want to be." While promoting the film, about three young guys navigating the dating world in New York City, Efron added that he "couldn't be happier."

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I'd like to thank Her for upholding hipster style...

What the tuck.
Sequins, slips and suits made this year's silver screen sparkle. But Her, with all its hipster hues and high-waistedness, will make likely make the most lasting mark on fashion

Joaquin's character in Her might be lacking in some social skills, but perhaps he can find fulfilment in his ability to choose interesting ensembles. CONTRIBUTED

Oscar-nominated Her didn't earn a nod for best costume design, but fashion observers say the retro-futuristic looks featured in the film take the trophy for trendsetting style.

American clothing label Opening Ceremony created a collection inspired by styles designed by Casey Storm for the inventive drama, which is set in near-future Los Angeles. Her chronicles the relationship between Theodore Twombly (Joaquin Phoenix) and his operating system (voiced by Scarlett Johansson), with the film's lovelorn protagonist regularly seen sporting buttoned-up collared shirts paired with ultra high-waisted pants.

"I think you tend to think of everyone putting their life out on display in the world that we live in now, and the fashions were really the opposite to that," said Noreen Flanagan, editor-in-chief of Elle Canada.

"It was very much about kind of concealing yourself which I thought, again, was a kind of interesting twist to what we're increasingly becoming more familiar with in terms of how we relate to one another in the digital world."

What a waist

"It's not going to be for everyone and, my God, you really have to have flat abs to wear pants like that. That is not a flattering silhouette on most people."
Noreen Flanagan
Editor-in-chief of Elle Canada

Probably of all the films, Flanagan said Her has the greatest likelihood of "getting a little bit of street cred."

"It's not going to be for everyone and, my God, you really have to have flat abs to wear pants like that. That is not a flattering silhouette on most people. It requires a certain young, youthful, in-shape physique to wear it. I can see for a certain hipster set it becoming quite cool."

Toronto-based costume and set designer Sarah Armstrong also sees the potential for Her to emerge as a trendsetter.

"(Theodore's) kind of got a look, a unique esthetic, that's not unlike what we see today. It's very, very comfortable. And I think, too, because he's a younger character, that may also lend itself to a trend that might come up."

While Armstrong said she didn't think there was anything "blindingly new" about the designs for Her, she viewed them as an interpretation of the hipster trend being embraced by the 20-something generation.

"They're pulling from steampunk, they're pulling from Victorian elements, from the '60s, they're pulling from a whole bunch of different eras and blending them all together."

On the opposite end of the style spectrum was costume design nominee American Hustle with its depiction of flashy '70s fashions. The film is awash in plunging necklines, brightly lacquered nails and bouffant do's as well as bell-bottoms and mile-wide ties with lapels to match.

Jennifer Lawrence's outfits in American Hustle are unforgettable, but did they distract from her performance? CONTRIBUTED

"We've had films in the past that have gone back to the '70s, but they really play down the hair, they really play down the wardrobe, the clothing," said Armstrong. "With American Hustle, it really is all about the excess of the '70s, and the characters are extreme."

Flanagan said while she found the clothes in Hustle to be "fun, fabulous and entertaining," she said she almost found them to be "too much."

"In terms of digging up those V-neck Halstons and Diane von Furstenberg dresses and vintage Dior aviators and Gucci accessories, full marks for going on a fashion treasure hunt and finding real gems from that period. But it needed some editing," she said. "It needed the director to say: 'Wait a minute. We don't want the fashions to overshadow the story and the characters.'"

THE CANADIAN PRESS

And the nominees are...

A handful of period pieces will be contending for the Oscar costume crown on March 2.

- The nominees are Catherine Martin (The Great Gatsby); Patricia Norris (12 Years a Slave); William Chang Suk Ping (The Grandmaster); Michael O'Connor (The Invisible Woman); and Michael Wilkinson (American Hustle).

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Left, Breath of Fresh Air, the Benjamin Moore Colour of the Year for 2014, is seen on the walls. Right, Benjamin Moore paint colour Lavender Mist is used on the walls while paint colour White Dove is on the trim.
BENJAMIN MOORE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pale, patterned and pretty all over

The house that hues built. Pastel shades and retro inspiration set to dominate home decor this year

Whether you're seeking to make a minor ripple or sizable splash in your home in 2014, prognosticators are hoping to help make this year a stylish one with predictions of noteworthy new looks in decor.

Suzanne Dimma, editor-in-chief of House and Home Magazine and Benjamin Moore colour expert Sharon Grech share their views on notable trends and suggestions on how to incorporate the changes within your interiors.

Cool hues

Colour trendsetter Pantone opted for vibrant pop with the selection of Radiant Orchid — a purple hue infused with hot pink — as its colour of the year for 2014.

But the ultra-bold shade seems to be the exception rather than the rule with a sleek yet more subdued palette of colours emerging for home interiors.

Benjamin Moore paint colour Caribbean Teal is seen on the walls while paint colour Distant Gray is used as the trim
BENJAMIN MOORE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Paint manufacturer Benjamin Moore selected Breath of Fresh Air — a pale, sky blue hue — as its colour of the year. While there were several examples of deep blue, teal and purple featured in its 2014 Colour Trends Guide, the company's standout hue for the new year was among a vast array of softer shades like Distant Gray, Peach Parfait and Lavender Mist.

Grech said the intention was to create a collection of colours that weren't specific to one particular style as has been customary in the past.

"Even though it's often the most economical part of your design project, it takes up a lot of space. And if you get that too strong, that's what you'll notice," she said in reference to paint colour choice. "Even if you spend a ton of money on your new sofa or your Carrara marble countertop, if you get the paint colour wrong, it throws everything off."

In the vein of paler hues, Dimma suggested opting for a soft grey which she described as "a new neutral."

"That's a huge change from white, and that will imbue everything with so much warmth," she said.

Pretty patterns

From the walls to tables to floors, there are no shortage of spaces to adorn with colourful prints. House and Home spotlighted blue and white dishware, painted tiles, whimsical wall murals and geometric wallpaper and fabrics among its decorating dos for 2014.

For those seeking to make a splash with a fresh print, Dimma suggested seeking out a Persian or Turkish rug. "That's an easy thing. Roll out a new rug and you're going to get a whole new look."

Classic and contemporary

While rugs and wall coverings are decidedly more bold, there is a more minimalist approach being seen in other core pieces for the coming year. Dimma highlighted '50s-inspired chairs as well as more contemporary sculptural lighting fixtures, both of which conjure a modern vibe.

She isn't surprised to see the gravitation towards retro-inspired '50s and '60s-era furnishings.

"When you think about it, we always find through cycles in design that we look back and then we make it new again, and it's probably just at that point in the cycle," said Dimma.

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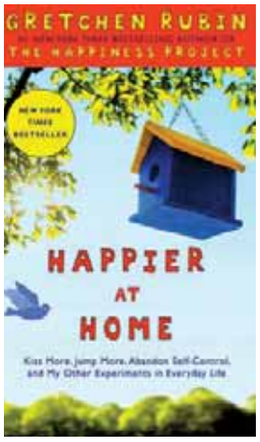
Make your bed, appreciate water, and other secrets to happiness

Happier at Home. Writer Gretchen Rubin shares her tips for making your home your happy place

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News



You probably spend a lot of time at home, so you might as well make the most out of it. ISTOCK

Gretchen Rubin, author of the wildly successful The Happiness Project, is all about finding joy in everyday life. While researching the best-seller, she discovered that "so many elements of a happy life come together in the idea of home. If you're not happy at home, it's hard to be happy," she says.

This idea drove her to write her next book, Happier at Home, where the 48-year-old set out to find "the realistic things I could do to make it a nicer experience to walk in my front door." She fills us in on how to get the good life.

Make your bed

"One of the most important things that I keep finding is the connection for most people between outer order and inner calm. Most people feel calmer and more energetic when they don't feel like they're surrounded by clutter.

"And weirdly, one of the things that people most often mention is the resolution to make your bed. So I say if you don't make your bed now, try it. Because it's the gateway. Your whole room will look neater and calmer," says Rubin.

Cultivate good smells

"There's so many wonderful smells at home, whether it's a bottle of vanilla, freshly laundered towels or a grapefruit," she says. "We often ignore the pleasure of the sense of smell, but if you focus your attention on it, it's a quick hit of happiness. No calories, no carbs, no time, no money. You just get that pleasure and move on. So if you like scented candles, light your scented candle. It's a little thing, but it just lifts your spirits."

Create a shrine

"A lot of people say you'll be happy with less, possessions don't matter, get rid of everything — but the fact is, for most people, possessions do have a role to play in a happy life," Rubin says.

"They allow you to project your identity into your environment. They serve as important reminders of the people, places and activities you love. Maybe you're sharing an apartment and you want some part of it to reflect you. There's all kinds of shrines."

Rubin's own shrine is dedicated to her passion for children's literature. "I have all my classics in one area. I mindfully arranged it, and it's one of my favourite parts of my apartment, just because I took the time to pull those things together."

Be grateful

"One of the things about home is that it's so easy to take it for granted," she says. "First of all, we take for granted things like electricity and running water. When we don't have them, we realize how precious they are.

With (Hurricane) Sandy, everybody really noticed how precious home is. It's hard to keep that attitude of gratitude, as people say. So what I do is, we have two doors you have to go through to walk in and out of my building. So every time I walk out of my apartment, I use what I call a threshold ritual. Every time I cross that threshold and go out into the street, I think about how happy I am to be leaving my happy apartment and going out in New York City, which I love. And every time I come in, I think how happy I am to be returning home. People who have feelings of gratefulness are happier.

The other window to the soul, apparently

> **"Your bed is a symbol of your soul. So when you've taken care of your bed, it's showing that you've taken care of yourself."**
> Gretchen Rubin

Abandon a project

"A lot of times we'll start some kind of project, like you're going learn how to cook French or you're going to learn how to knit — I had a friend who was going to make beer in his bathtub. But then you sort of abandon it.

"Maybe it's not as fun as you thought, or for whatever reason you're just not keeping up with it. But then that stuff just hangs around and it clutters up your shelves, but it also clutters up your conscience because every time you look at it you're like, 'Oh gosh, I've got to get back into knitting,' even though you know you're not going to get back into knitting.

"So abandon a project, get rid of the stuff associated with it. When it's not used, it's more than useless. It's a negative. Not only is it taking up space, but it's creating an anxiety or a guilt in your mind."

Tackle clutter

Do you find that even when you get everything organized, it's soon all a mess again? "You have to manage (clutter) constantly," says Rubin, who swears by the one-minute rule. "Anything that I can do in under a minute, I do without delay," she says. "If I can hang up a coat, if I can rip open a letter, if I can put newspapers in the recycling, if I can file a receipt in a folder. By getting rid of these little tasks, you feel much more able to tackle big tasks. When you walk in your room and see a million little things you have to do, you feel weighed down by it. You're like, 'Where should I even start?' So just doing things one minute at a time, it's manageable and realistic.

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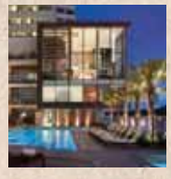
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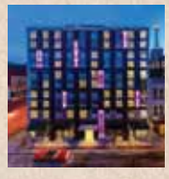
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Make a big impact with big art

This year's trend is to go with bigger, bolder artwork — whether it's one large piece or several smaller ones grouped together to create a unified effect. Here are a few tips to help you make the most of your space, even if you're on a budget or live in a small condo with little wall space.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

For big effect, group smaller pieces together. Various prints, crateandbarrel.com

The trend

With the trend of floor-to-ceiling windows, large intake vents and multiple light switches taking up valuable wall space in newer condos, it's hard to find little — if any — wall space to hang artwork. Often your only choice is an obscure wall, off to the side. The trend for 2014 is bigger and bolder artwork, creating big impact in a space with one large piece rather than a row of small gallery style hangings. To achieve impact with many small pieces, try arranging them into a rectangular grouping, which creates the effect of one big shape rather than many small ones.

Rules for hanging

When hung on an empty wall, the middle of the piece of artwork should hang 66 inches from the floor. If hanging art over a piece of furniture, the bottom of your artwork should be hung six to nine inches above it. A decorative picture light will help to illuminate your artwork and make it a focal point. If hung on the wall, art should be framed; if not, display it on a decorative easel or lean on a floating shelf. The colour of the frame should match either the wood tones or metal finishes used in the room; this will coordinate the art into the room with ease.

The middle of your artwork should hang 66 inches from the floor. Cloud Study print, $970, crateandbarrel.com

A favourite image can be printed on canvas and stretched on a frame to create a custom piece of art. From $25, posterjack.ca

Art on a budget

Everyone thinks art (especially larger pieces) needs to be expensive. Art needs to be thoughtful, not pricey. For affordable art, look to art school sales, vintage poster prints and big home retailers that now sell limited-run pieces (with the fast turnover of products, a favourite piece may only be around for a few months). You can also get creative and customize your own art; a favourite image can be emailed to a custom print company and reproduced on wood, stainless steel or canvas at any size. Also, painting the wall a contrasting colour is a great way to make your art piece pop; go dark or bright for impact.

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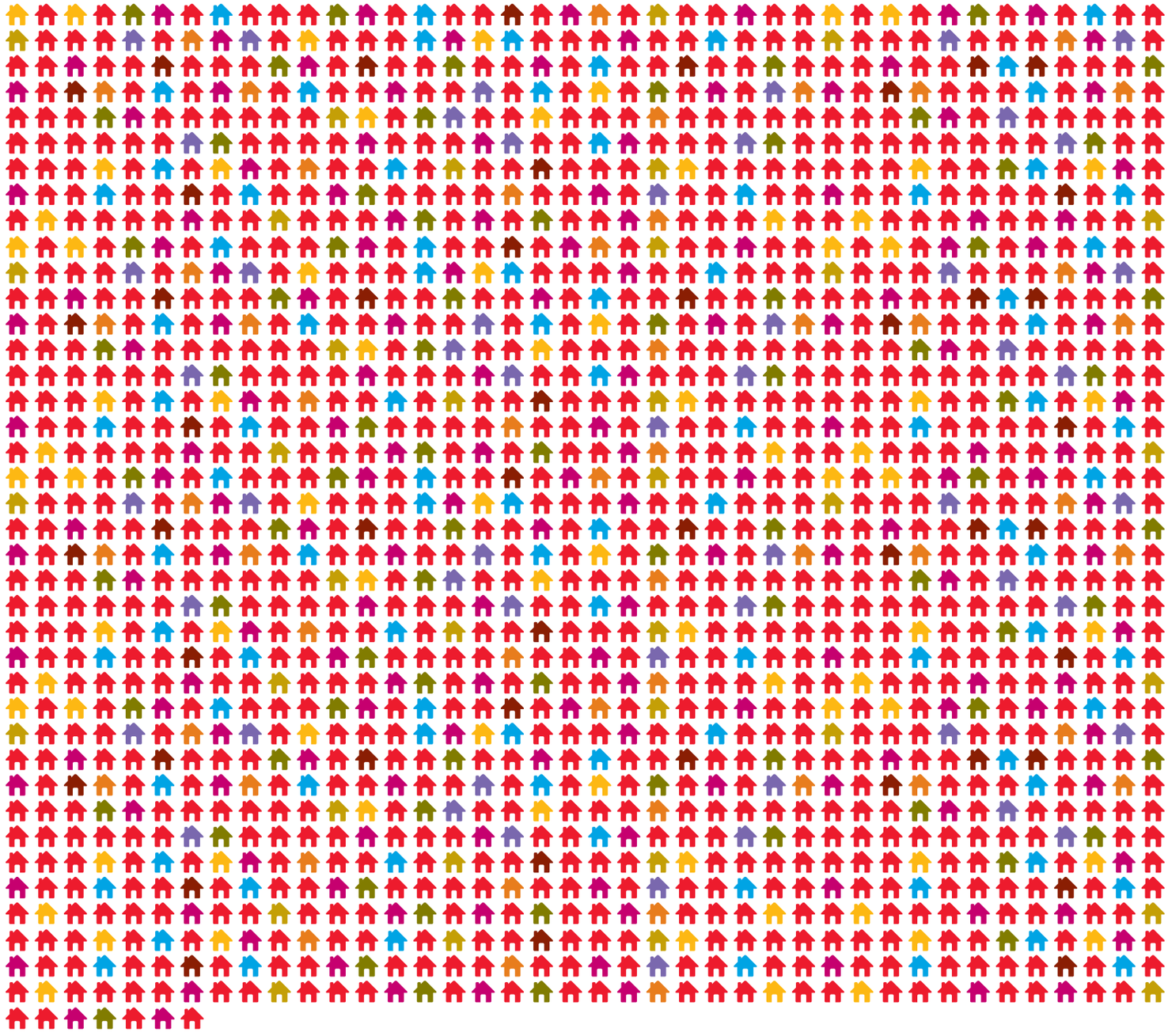

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Give your outdated kitchen a new look without breaking the bank

Home renos. Painting cupboards, updating light fixtures or reupholstering chairs can change the look of an out-of-date kitchen

Saying goodbye to an '80s kitchen can be as easy as applying a coat of paint, modernizing lighting and installing stone countertops.

Though kitchen renovations can often require a serious financial investment, painting kitchen cabinets is a relatively inexpensive way to give the space a new look, says Lana Lounsbury, an interior designer in Victoria.

"If you've got old wood cabinets that are beat up or need to be refinished, painting them can bring them up-to-date," says Lounsbury.

But she warns that homeowners should be aware of the kind of wood their cabinets are made of before they paint them, and what kind of paint they use.

"You cannot paint oak — the grain is too deep — and when you put lacquer over it they look fake and gross because you can still see the grain," she says.

"Homeowners should also contemplate having them professionally sprayed in a booth to avoid having the marks of brushes and rollers seen in the end product."

Lounsbury says homeowners shouldn't cut costs on paint and are advised to use a high-quality, semi-gloss sheen after applying a primer.

While quartz, stone and marble countertops can be a major investment in a kitchen, you can make an impact by installing a new countertop on a smaller space like an island.

"If you go to any of the granite or marble yards, they might have off-cuts of other jobs and you could buy pieces," says Lounsbury. "But I would say when it comes to marble and stone you should pay for it."

Marina Hildebrand, an interior designer in Regina, says updating lighting fixtures can change the look of a kitchen.

According to Hildebrand, homeowners are replacing the '90s trend of three small pendant fixtures with two, more dramatic lights.

"Lighting is dramatic and pretty inexpensive considering the options out there right now," she says.

Lounsbury points out that a mix of ambient and task lighting is important in a kitchen.

Incorporating colour and pattern in a kitchen is another effective way to update the space and Hildebrand says this can be done using fabric on chairs and bar stools.

"Get some new chairs and if they are inexpensive get them reupholstered," she says. "You don't have to choose expensive fabrics. You can go to the fabric store and pick out some wow stuff, and create a bit of punch."

For homeowners who have more experience in home renovations, or who are interested in learning, Hildebrand says including a new backsplash in the kitchen can make an impact.

"There are so many products online and at home improvement stores that are pretty inexpensive, but they still require a bit of skill," she says. "Many home improvement stores offer classes on tiling if homeowners are willing to invest some time."

Both Hildebrand and Lounsbury say there are many ways homeowners can update their kitchens on their own, but they should be aware of their own skills and abilities when it comes to home improvement.

Homeowners shouldn't overestimate their skills because if they tackle projects out of their comfort zone it could take away from the final result, notes Hildebrand.

"Sometimes they just need to come to terms with what they have and recognize that a lot of the world would love to have our problems with out-of-date kitchens. Maybe sometimes smaller is better because homeowners can afford to treat their space well, and that is well appointed and well done."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

New lighting is a dramatic and inexpensive way to change the look of a kitchen. LANA LOUNSBURY INTERIORS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Outdated kitchens can be revitalized by introducing a bold backsplash or painting the cabinets. ISTOCK

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When installing laminate flooring, install the first four or five rows first without joining them to the wall, say celebrity contractors. ISTOCK

Top 10 tips for the at-home handyman

Learn from the pros. Celebrity contractors share some pointers to help you with your next DIY project

There are all sorts of jobs around the house you can do yourself, but some tips from the experts will make these tasks quicker and easier. Go beyond the usual "measure twice, cut once" advice with these quick tips from celebrity contractors and HGTV stars Scott McGillivray and Bryan Baeumler.

• If you're trying to square up a corner, use the Pythagorean theorem.

• A tip for trim: Measure all of your walls first and note the measurement at the bottom of the wall as it will eventually be covered by the trim. Then cut all of your trim at once with a good mitre saw. This is a much faster process than measuring and cutting one wall at a time.

• When you're installing casing around a door or window, your first piece should be nailed in the middle, leaving the end open. By not fastening the starting piece from the beginning, you allow for room to adjust it when it joins with the last piece of casing.

• When installing studs in the wall, mark the crown on all of them to ensure that you don't have flex in opposite directions. It's up for debate whether it's better to crown in or crown out — but it's agreed that they should all be in the same direction.

• Acclimatize your materials. If you're working in the winter and the flooring you plan to use has been sitting in the garage, make sure to bring it inside to sit for at least 48 hours before use.

• When you're installing laminate flooring, install the first four or five rows first without joining to the wall. This gives you enough of a base to sit or kneel down in order to complete the remainder of the floor.

• If you're painting a room with a roller, always move the direction of your painting towards the arm of the roller. The arm side is the side with the most pressure on it, often causing lines in the painting. The side with less pressure will get rid of the lines in the paint that it creates.

• If you are tackling a backsplash project, it often comes close to electrical outlets. Be sure to turn off the breaker before starting the tiling, as a wet sponge and a live outlet is not a good combination for your kitchen DIY.

• When installing drywall, always work top to bottom. Cut and install the ceiling first and move your way down. Working this way ensures the clean lines are at the top, while the messier lines will be at the bottom of the wall, eventually covered by the baseboards.

• Always maintain your tools. For instance, before cutting trim be sure to square up the fence on your saw with a framing square. While cutting the trim, every hour or so stop and vacuum out the corner pieces and end cuts to avoid pieces flying at you.

Handyman Challenge

- Watch celebrity contractors and HGTV stars Scott McGillivray, Bryan Baeumler and Paul Lafrance judge amateur handymen in projects ranging from catapults to rocking horses in an all-new season of Canada's Handyman Challenge, airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on HGTV Canada.

From left, Scott McGillivray, Paul Lafrance and Bryan Baeumler appear on Canada's Handyman Challenge. CONTRIBUTED

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While offering functional storage and ample room to get creative, this play table from RH Baby & Child will also appeal to families that want recreational spaces to blend in with the rest of the home. RH BABY & CHILD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hip, retro-style robot, typography and animal patterns work well in modern homes where play rooms are used by adults as well. ALLMODERN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Modern play spaces can be cool, contemporary and kid-friendly

Weekend project. If you want a space for your kids that reflects your design esthetic, here are some ideas

Mod mad

Lots of decor from the '60s and '70s works well in a play space: mod lamps, modular furniture, pop art, and fun, space-age prints for wallpaper and textiles. Hues popular back then — orange, yellow, teal, green, white — add energy to furniture, cushions and rugs.

Amanda Nisbet, a designer in New York, used a Roy Lichtenstein print and a chrome-trimmed bubble chair in one of her children's space projects (amandanisbetdesign.com).

Victoria Sanchez, a designer in Washington, used colourful Missoni fabrics to liven up a teen lounge (victoriaathome.com).

Check out modshop1.com and designpublic.com for pieces — many of them kid-size — that fit the style.

Hip, retro-style robot, typography and animal patterns designed by New Yorker Nancy Wolff are at allmodern.com.

And chocolate, tangerine or red-knitted poufs and flat-weave rugs with zingy geometric graphics are part of the signature line at fab.com.

For a low-key look that still fits the esthetic, think smooth-edged Danish modern wood furniture. Armless upholstered club chairs look smart and are perfect for lounging; find new ones at overstock.com and vintage ones on etsy.com.

Or take a cue from Australian designer Anna Williams and use mid-century credenzas for toy storage — check out thrivefurniture.com and onekingslane.com for options at various prices.

Accent with Mad Men-era posters or toy ads, and add floor pillows covered in patterns drawn from the era. Soothing hues like umber, avocado, mustard and sky blue keep the energy relaxed.

Industrial chic

Rooms with an industrial feel — warehouse-grade tables and storage, furniture and decorative elements with a rugged look — appeal to many kids, who sense they can let loose in these spaces. And the style's on trend, so it's easy to do.

Neutral colour palettes mixing whites, greys and browns work for either gender. Look for ceiling lights caged in metal (no worries about errant pillows or Nerf balls), riveted furniture, and repurposed machine-shop elements such as gear pieces, tools and signage. A galvanized-iron, locker-style dresser makes great storage (pbteen.com).

Powder-coated in crisp red or white, Ikea's PS metal cabinet adds a pop of colour (ikea.com). A magnetized blackboard fits the edgy vibe and lets inspiration fly. Make your own inexpensively with instructions at theturquoisehome.com.

Rugged-looking play tables offer surfaces for messy art and often offer great storage for toys and games (rhbabyandchild.com).

Lumber, flooring and stone yards will often give old pallets away: Lots of ideas for making your own play or coffee table can be found at home-dzine.co.za.

Exploration location

Animals, trees, and sky or earth elements can inspire children to be creative in play spaces, and many contemporary pieces appeal to both kids and adults. At stardust.com, find the Zuo Modern Phante chair, a version of Eames' iconic, polypropylene, elephant-shaped chair.

A realistic, cast-resin bear's head is fun, eclectic wall art (urbanoutfitters.com).

Ocean Sole's animal sculptures made out of scavenged flip flops would be inspiration for indoor adventures — rhinos, giraffes and lions come in sizes up to about five feet long. (thespotteddoor.com; piqproducts.com)

Clouds and intergalactic silver orbs are two of the striking mural wallpapers at designyourwall.com. Ikea's Vandring Spar low-pile rug features an Impressionist version of a nature walk, complete with grass and sandy footprints. And a soft grey and white wool rug silhouettes romping deer and a leafy forest at landofnod.com.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Other ideas

- Create customized storage by painting or staining ready-made kitchen cabinets. Metal tool carts can be side tables, as well as portable art supply zones or storage stations for small toy parts.
- Multipurpose pieces serve the whole family's needs. Land of Nod's round coffee table with drawers is user-friendly for TV watching, table games and crafts, with no sharp corners to worry about.
- Display books face forward on wall-mounted shelves with a lip, so covers can be easily seen. Or scrounge flea markets for old wooden carpenter's tool boxes, which are sturdy and shallow. Use games as art by displaying the boxes on floating shelves.
- Shoot photos of kids' favourite toys — close-ups, Instagrams and black-and-white look cool — and then mount them in identical frames. Ikea has inexpensive options, and Michaels' craft stores stock three-packs of LP frames. When the kids set up their own places in a few years, this will be hip art with happy memories.

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Cookbook of the Week

Adapting tradition

Because the farmworkers and other labourers of Portugal needed food to be hearty and filling, it has come to be known as "peasant food". Whatever you call it, one thing is for sure: the dishes of this European country are comfort food at its finest.

Pimentos and Piri Piri by Carla Azevedo takes traditional recipes and updates them for the North American kitchen with local ingredients and modern kitchen equipment.

Among the recipes in the book are: Quail in Cream Sauce, Cod and Chickpeas, Portuguese Pulled Pork and more. METRO

Clams cosy right up to pork

"A cataplana, a hinged clam-shaped cooking vessel, is so popular in the Algarve beach resorts that dozens of dishes have been named after it," writes Carla Azevedo in her book Pimentos and Piri Piri of this Clams in Cataplana with Pork, White Wine, and Coriander dish. "If you do not have a cataplana, use a wok or a large pot with a tight-fitting lid and carefully cover the lid with a kitchen towel; do not uncover the pot while cooking."

Ingredients

- 2 lb (1 kg) Manila clams
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) olive oil
- 4 oz (120 g) pork tenderloin, cubed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) peeled, seeded, and chopped tomatoes
- 1/2 red bell pepper, seeded, cored, and diced
- 4 oz (120 g) chouriço, sliced into 1/2-inch (1 cm) pieces
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) fine salt
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) coarsely ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) piri-piri sauce or Tabasco sauce
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) dry white wine
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) chopped fresh coriander
- 2 slices prosciutto, chopped

1. Using a stiff brush, scrub the clams under cold running water to remove any surface sand and grit. Discard any clams that are not tightly closed. Set aside.

2. In a large heavy saucepan or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat; cook the pork for 2 to 3 minutes, until browned, and transfer to a dish; reserve. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 to 5 minutes, until softened. Add the tomatoes, red pepper, chouriço, bay leaf, salt, pepper, oregano, and piri-piri sauce; simmer for 7 to 10 minutes, until slightly thickened.

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

3. Transfer half of the tomato mixture to bottom of cataplana. Arrange the clams overtop and cover with the remaining tomato mixture. Tightly secure the cataplana lid and simmer over medium-high heat for 5 minutes. Flip the cataplana over and unlatch it; add the reserved pork and the wine and sprinkle with the coriander and prosciutto. Tightly secure the cataplana lid and cook until the shells open and the pork juices run clear when pierced with fork, 5 to 8 minutes (check for doneness after 5 minutes of cooking and continue cooking if meat is still pink). Discard any clams that have not opened. Serve.

RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM PIMENTOS AND PIRI PIRI (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY CARLA AZEVEDO.

This recipe serves four as an appetizer or two as a main. RYAN SZULC, FROM PIMENTOS AND PIRI PIRI (WHITECAP BOOKS)

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MLB

Yanks win Tanaka sweepstakes

The New York Yankees and prized Japanese pitcher Masahiro Tanaka agreed Wednesday to a $155-million, seven-year contract.

In addition to the deal with the 25-year-old right-hander, the Yankees must pay a $20-million fee to his Japanese team, the Rakuten Golden Eagles.

Tanaka's deal is the highest for an international free agent.

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NHL

Red Wings top Blackhawks in shootout

Darren Helm scored on Detroit's sixth attempt in the shootout and Jonas Gustavsson stopped Andrew Shaw's shot, lifting the Detroit Red Wings to a 5-4 win over the Chicago Blackhawks on Wednesday night.

The defending Stanley Cup champion Blackhawks faced Detroit for the first time since beating them in overtime in Game 7 of their second-round series last year to complete a comeback from a 3-1 deficit.

Chicago captain Jonathan Toews scored on his team's first attempt in the shootout and Patrick Sharp scored on the second before Patrick Kane was stopped with a chance to win the game.

Gustavsson, playing for the injured Jimmy Howard, made 31 saves in his first game in nearly a month.

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Kellan Lain forming NHL memories fast

Starting with a bang.
Young forward fights, scores during eventful first week in bigs

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

The Canucks' Kellan Lain crowds the front of Edmonton goalie Ben Scrivens's net on Tuesday night in Edmonton.
DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

Tucked in the top-left corner of his stall at Rogers Arena, Kellan Lain keeps a now cherished souvenir.

It's the puck he scored his first career NHL goal with, white tape now wrapped around it and black marker signifying in writing the accomplishment, which came against the Edmonton Oilers on Tuesday.

Just another memory in what has been an eventful few days in The Show.

In his NHL debut Saturday against the Calgary Flames, the six-foot-six Lain was ejected for a secondary altercation after he was forced into a fight with Kevin Westgarth during the infamous line brawl off the opening faceoff.

"I don't really have a trophy case but it will go with my other pucks, my first college goal and first AHL goal," said Lain on Wednesday, after the Canucks skated at Rogers Arena.

"I think it's exciting any way it happens. I don't think it's more exciting or less, being able to score that goal no matter what — it's a pretty cool experience."

Lain's stats line now reads: two games played; one goal; one point; 15 penalty minutes; one shot on goal and a 100 per cent shooting percentage.

His name is also in the record books.

He set the new record for fastest fight to begin an NHL career at two seconds, and tying another league record for scoring on his first shot in the NHL.

Lain's goal came off a rebound, with Dale Weise and Tom Sestito, also involved in Saturday's mayhem against the Flames.

The 24-year-old Lain, signed as a college free agent last March, chipped the loose puck off Oilers goalie Ben Scrivens then off a defenceman and just into the net.

Not necessarily a beauty. But, as the adage goes, at the end of the season, they don't ask "how," they ask "how many?"

Lain's teammates certainly appreciate it, especially after the position he found himself in Saturday.

"For him to do what he did Saturday was great and for him to go out and get that goal for us, and not just for us but for him and his family, it's a special moment," said Canucks' forward Zack Kassian.

Henrik update

Henrik Sedin, who did not play Tuesday in Edmonton due to injury, missing a regular-season game for the first time since March 19, 2004, is still considered "day-to-day" ahead of Thursday night's game against the Nashville Predators, according to assistant coach Mike Sullivan.

- The Canucks' captain did not take part in Wednesday's practice, either.

Aussie Open final out of reach for Bouchard

Eugenie Bouchard reaches in an attempt to return a shot during her loss to Li Na in the Australian Open semifinal on Thursday in Melbourne.
ANDREW BROWNBILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Montreal's Eugenie Bouchard is out of the Australian Open.

China's Li Na defeated Bouchard 6-2, 6-4 on Thursday in the semifinal of the women's singles tournament.

The 19-year-old Bouchard is the first Canadian woman to reach the final four of a Grand Slam tournament in 30 years.

No. 4-seeded Li, the 2011 French Open champion, is the only major winner and the highest-ranked player still in contention after the fourth-round upsets of Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova. Defending champion Victoria Azarenka lost in the quarterfinal to Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland.

No. 5-seeded Radwanska was playing Dominika Cibulkova in the second semifinal later Thursday.

Li, who lost last year's final to Azarenka, was aggressive from the start against Bouchard, who started nervously and didn't win a point in her first three service games.

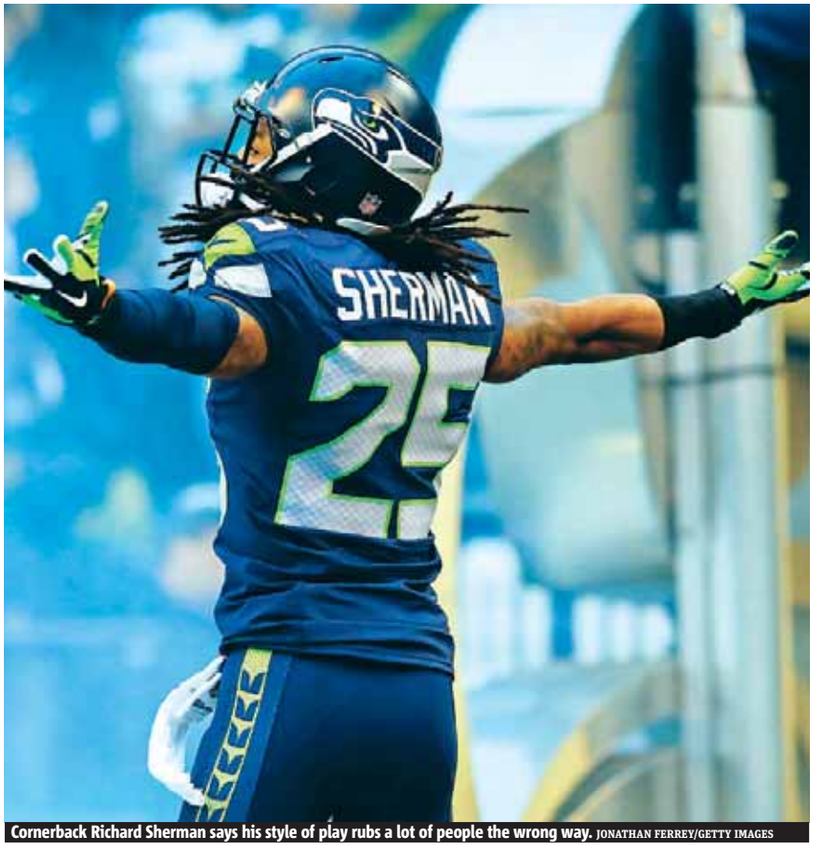
Fittingly, she finished off the match with a backhand crosscourt, one of 16 backhand winners in the match and her biggest weapon against Bouchard.

Earlier in the day, Toronto's Daniel Nestor and Serbian partner Nenad Zimonjic were beaten by American Eric Butorac and Raven Klaasen of South Africa 6-2, 6-4 in the semifinal of the men's doubles tournament.

The defeat leaves the 41-year-old Nestor to concentrate on the mixed-doubles event after winning 12 straight matches and winning Australian titles in Brisbane and Sydney with two different partners.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 SPORTS



Cornerback Richard Sherman says his style of play rubs a lot of people the wrong way. JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

Seahawks' Sherman surprised by reaction to post-game rant

NFL. Star cornerback compares incident to Canucks-Flames brawl

Richard Sherman wondered if he came to the NFL 20 years too late.

The Seattle Seahawks' All-Pro cornerback wondered if his swagger might have fit better a few decades earlier when that confidence and an unfiltered tongue were more accepted.

"I studied the old-school game more than I studied the new-school game, and I play it that way. It rubs a lot of people the wrong way," Sherman said Wednesday. "Giving a true speech after a game, a true passionate speech is old-school football. Playing press corner and sitting up there every play is old-school football. I guess maybe I just haven't adjusted to the times."

Sherman spoke at length for the first time since Sunday's NFC championship game win over San Francisco, where his post-game comments to Fox reporter Erin Andrews became the talking point. It was a loud, emotional moment that happened just a few minutes after the Seahawks earned the second Super Bowl berth in franchise history.

Sherman was at the centre of the decisive play, deflecting a pass intended for Michael Crabtree in the end zone and watching teammate Malcolm Smith run over to intercept it to clinch the victory. Sherman's ensuing remarks were directed mostly at Crabtree but his intense, shouting delivery is what took people aback.

What seemed to bother Sherman the most in the fallout was hearing the word "thug" attached to his name.

"The only reason it bothers me is it seems like it's an accepted way of calling someone the N-word nowadays. It's like everybody else said the N-word and they said thug and they're like, 'That's fine,'" he said.

Sherman then referenced seeing highlights of the Vancouver Canucks and Calgary Flames playing on Saturday when a fight broke out two seconds into the game.

"I saw that and said, 'Oh, man, I'm the thug?'"

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Fair analogy?

"They didn't even play.... They just threw their sticks aside and started fighting." Richard Sherman

Super Bowl. Injury-prone Harvin returns to practice

Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Percy Harvin has cleared league-mandated concussion protocol and has returned to practice as a full participant.

Harvin was on the field for Seattle's practice on Wednesday, his first since suffering a concussion in the second quarter of the NFC divisional playoff game against New Orleans on Jan. 11. Harvin was not cleared last week and was unable to play in the NFC championship game against San Francisco.

Harvin's had an injury-filled season, playing in just two of 18 games. He had hip surgery in early August and made his debut in Week 11 against Minnesota.

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NBA

Durant stays hot in Texas to take out feisty Spurs

Kevin Durant had 36 points to offset Tony Parker's season-high 37, and the Oklahoma City Thunder survived a testy 111-105 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday night, their third win this season over the defending Western Conference champions.

Reggie Jackson had 27 points and Serge Ibaka added 14 points for Oklahoma City (33-10), which reclaimed the West's best record.

Tim Duncan and Boris Diaw scored 14 points each, Marco Belinelli had 13 points and Manu Ginobili added 10 points. Duncan added 13 rebounds, but San Antonio (32-10) struggled to overcome the loss of their top defensive stopper, Kawhi Leonard.

Durant finished 12 for 22, but struggled to get his shot off against the snug defence of the 6-foot-7 Leonard, who has a 7-4 wingspan. Leonard left the game late in the first half after sustaining a non-displaced fracture in his right hand. His status is unknown.

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NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	49	31	15	3	141	109	65
Tampa Bay	50	29	16	5	146	123	63
Montreal	50	27	18	5	127	125	59
Toronto	52	27	20	5	150	156	59
Detroit	50	22	18	10	127	138	54
Ottawa	50	22	19	9	141	155	53
Florida	50	20	23	7	120	151	47
Buffalo	48	13	28	7	89	137	33

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	50	35	13	2	162	121	72
NY Rangers	52	27	22	3	131	133	57
Philadelphia	51	25	20	6	139	147	56
Columbus	49	25	20	4	143	138	54
New Jersey	51	21	19	11	122	124	53
Washington	50	22	20	8	142	152	52
Carolina	49	21	19	9	120	139	51
NY Islanders	52	21	24	7	147	169	49

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	52	32	8	12	188	144	76
St. Louis	49	33	11	5	171	115	71
Colorado	49	31	13	5	144	127	67
Minnesota	52	27	20	5	125	129	59
Dallas	50	22	20	8	141	152	52
Nashville	51	22	22	7	125	152	51
Winnipeg	51	23	23	5	144	152	51

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	52	37	10	5	177	129	79
San Jose	50	32	12	6	161	123	70
Los Angeles	51	29	16	6	131	108	64
Vancouver	51	26	16	9	129	128	61
Phoenix	49	23	17	9	141	149	55
Calgary	50	16	27	7	111	159	39
Edmonton	52	15	31	6	132	183	36

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Wednesday's results
Carolina 3 Philadelphia 2
Pittsburgh 5 Montreal 1
Detroit 5 Chicago 4 (SO)
Phoenix at Calgary
Tuesday's results
Columbus 5 Los Angeles 3
New Jersey 7 St. Louis 1
Ottawa 2 Washington 0
Florida 4 Buffalo 3
Carolina at Philadelphia, postponed
NY Islanders 5 NY Rangers 3
Dallas 4 Minnesota 0
Toronto 5 Colorado 2
Vancouver 2 Edmonton 1
Winnipeg 3 Anaheim 2
Thursday's games
All Times Eastern
St. Louis at NY Rangers, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at NY Islanders, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Chicago at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Nashville at Vancouver, 10 p.m.
Los Angeles at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Winnipeg at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

Friday's games
Ottawa at Carolina, postponed
Washington at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Colorado at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Montreal at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Nashville at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Phoenix at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	25	43	68
Tavares, NYI	23	39	62
Getzlaf, Ana	25	34	59
Kane, Chi	23	33	56
Perry, Ana	27	28	55
Thornton, SJ	6	47	53
Kessel, Tor	26	26	52
Okposo, NYI	20	31	51
Pavelski, SJ	27	23	50
St. Louis, TBL	25	25	50
Sharp, Chi	25	25	50
Ovechkin, Wash	35	14	49

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

SUPER BOWL XLVIII

Sunday, Feb. 2 — At East Rutherford, N.J.
Denver vs. Seattle, 6:30 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	33	7	.825	—
d-Miami	30	12	.714	4
Atlanta	22	19	.537	11 1/2
d-Toronto	21	20	.512	12 1/2
Chicago	21	20	.512	12 1/2
Washington	20	21	.488	13 1/2
Brooklyn	18	22	.450	15
Charlotte	19	25	.432	16
Detroit	17	25	.405	17
Cleveland	15	27	.357	19
New York	15	27	.357	19
Boston	15	29	.341	20
Philadelphia	14	28	.333	20
Orlando	11	32	.256	23 1/2
Milwaukee	8	33	.195	25 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Oklahoma City	33	10	.767	—
d-San Antonio	32	10	.762	1/2
Portland	31	11	.738	1 1/2
d-L.A. Clippers	29	15	.659	4 1/2
Houston	29	15	.659	4 1/2
Golden State	26	17	.605	7
Phoenix	23	17	.575	8 1/2
Dallas	25	19	.568	8 1/2
Memphis	20	20	.500	11 1/2
Denver	20	20	.500	11 1/2
Minnesota	20	21	.488	12
New Orleans	16	25	.390	16
L.A. Lakers	16	26	.381	16 1/2
Sacramento	15	26	.366	17
Utah	14	29	.326	19

x - clinched playoff berth; y - division; z - conference.

Wednesday's results
Toronto 93 Dallas 85
Charlotte 95 L.A. Clippers 91
Boston 113 Washington 111 OT
Chicago 98 Cleveland 87
Atlanta 112 Orlando 109
Philadelphia 110 New York 106
Houston 119 Sacramento 98
Oklahoma City 111 San Antonio 105
Milwaukee 104 Detroit 101
Indiana at Phoenix
Tuesday's results
Brooklyn 101 Orlando 90
Miami 93 Boston 86
Sacramento 114 New Orleans 97
Oklahoma City 105 Portland 97
Minnesota 112 Utah 97

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Is what you are planning a good idea? Could you have overestimated your abilities? Don't worry. The planets indicate you have what it takes and once you get moving all your doubt will disappear.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will fall out with someone who does not share your aims. It's just as well. The longer you go on pretending that you can work together despite your differences, the less likely it is you will get any work done.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
The important thing now is that you keep your eyes fixed on the bigger picture and don't allow yourself to be distracted by events that get in the way of your goals. Have fun but you've got to be focused too.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Give your tongue a rest and use your eyes and ears to find out what is going on. Something you see over the next 24 hours will give you something worth talking about later on.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Someone you live or work with is harbouring a secret grudge and if you say the wrong thing they will find a way to use it against you. Think before you speak and make sure you know what you are talking about.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you take what someone tells you at face value, you will miss what really matters. Before you make any kind of decision, make sure you know the facts.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
The Sun in Aquarius does wonders for your confidence, so it's unlikely you will tone down your remarks to save other people's blushes. And why should you? It's not your fault the truth is painful.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Rarely have you had so many obligations. Rarely have your duties been so arduous. The good news is there are people in your life who will happily lend a hand — just ask.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The only reason someone is being so critical is because they resent your success. Maybe you should point out to them that if they worked as hard as you they might be successful too.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Don't worry if you have not yet begun work on a scheme that means a lot to you. The longer you leave it, the more likely it is to be a success. Good ideas need time to develop.

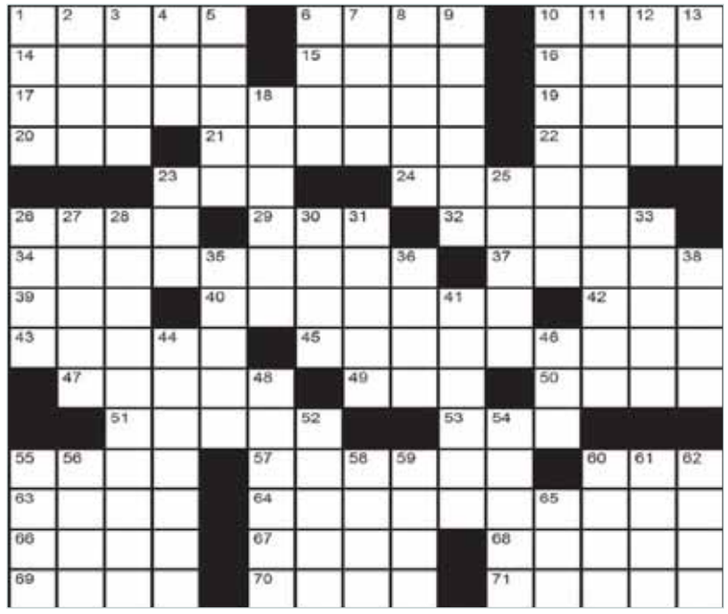
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
It does not matter that others do not believe in what you are doing. The only thing that matters is that you believe in it. The whole world could be against you now but you will still come out on top.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Be careful who you confide in today because if you reveal your secrets to the wrong person, they won't remain secret for long! It might be wise not to let even good friends in on potentially embarrassing information. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

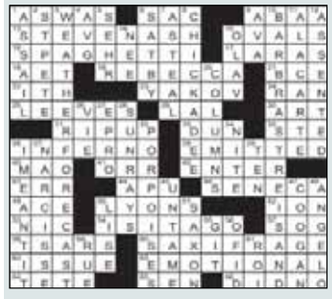
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Canadian furniture store, The __
6. Purchased
10. "__ __ I say, not..."
14. Ms. O'Donnell
15. Classical song
16. Sea lettuce
17. "Citizen Kane" (1941), for one: 2 wds.
19. Deli loaves
20. The Joy Luck Club author, Amy __
21. Guy in authority, in slang: 2 wds.
22. Pickup trucks, e.g.
23. Wed.'s follower
24. Quebec: Pre-university school
26. Johannesburg, _. __.
29. Fast rotation meas.
32. Levi's material
34. Submarine's looking device
37. "The Odd Couple" role
39. 'Advert' suffix
40. One who is selecting
42. Objectionable word
43. Puccini opera that premiered in 1900
45. 'Eating Well with Canada's __ __'
47. Drugstore, for short
49. '60s hallucinogenic
50. Fruity drinks
51. "This is so fun!" sounds
53. Suffix with 'Hero'
55. "So long!"
57. Colm of "Star Trek: The Next Generation"
60. Pres. Lincoln
63. Guess Who's "Hang __ __ Your Life"
64. Bookstore's popular item
66. Leave in, in proofreading
67. Rosey __, Canadian broadcaster
68. Worker's needs
69. Crags
70. Scandinavian rugs
71. Exertion excretion

Down
1. Ms. Spears, to pals
2. Cabo da __, Portugal
3. Glenn Frey song: "The Heat __ __"
4. NFL's Bengals, on scoreboards
5. "American Idol" judge Mr. Urban
6. Vault
7. "Hurry up ...__ __ leaving without you!"
8. Lavender
9. "Village of the __" (1995)
10. "Quentin __ M.P." (Vintage CBC show starring Gordon Pinsent)
11. That which Sochi's won in order to get the 2014 Winter Games: 2 wds.
12. With: French
13. Cheek
18. 1750: Halifax's oldest building, St. Paul's __
23. Prefix with 'angle'
25. Captain __ von Trapp
26. Skewer
27. Writer of ancient Greece
28. Superior's stuff
30. Magician's disappearing word!
31. Bobbin
33. "All in the Family" spin-off
35. Daunt
36. Those, in Spanish
38. Bus travel paths, for short
41. Mr. Cibrian's
44. Collusions
46. Abu Dhabi is its cap.
48. MP = __ of Parliament
52. Shabby
54. Sochi turndowns
55. Toll
56. Look __ (Investigate)
58. Drifting
59. Utmost degrees
60. Lotion component
61. Mr. Lugosi
62. Poet's 'previously'
65. High's antonym

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	3		7	2	6		9	
5								3
		1				8		
7	5		8		4		2	1
				7				
6	8		5		1		4	9
		9				5		
3								7
	2		4	1	5		3	

Yesterday's Sudoku

8	2	3	6	1	4	5	7	9
9	1	5	3	7	8	6	2	4
7	4	6	9	5	2	1	8	3
5	3	1	4	2	9	7	6	8
6	8	2	7	3	1	4	9	5
4	9	7	8	6	5	3	1	2
2	6	8	1	4	3	9	5	7
1	5	4	2	9	7	8	3	6
3	7	9	5	8	6	2	4	1

Today 8°/2° Sunny
Friday 8°/4° Sunny
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TWN incorporates MSC data

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